TOWARD HAPPINESS
AND
HOLINESS IN MARRIAGE

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INTRODUCTION

IT IS ONLY a matter of good sense for a human being to prepare oneself for a calling in which one is to spend the greater part of his life, so that the objectives of this calling will be more easily attained, the obligations entailed more fully realized and thus greater happiness and success will be enjoyed in this world and in the next. Priests and religious, professional men and business administrators, artisans and technicians, nurses and teachers, in fact all avocations in life need some preparation. Indeed, a great many people spend one-third of their life preparing themselves for their calling in life.

The vast majority of people spend their lives in the married state. Marriage is a sacred and high calling. The family is the most important institution in human society. It is very important that men and women entering this state are properly prepared to fulfill the duties of the married state and establish a strong, Christian family. Pius XI in his letter on *Christian Marriage* brings out the point that success in the married state "depends in large measure on the due preparation, remote and proximate, of the parties for marriage." He continues, "it cannot be denied that the basis of a happy wedlock and the ruin of an unhappy one, is prepared and set in the souls of boys and girls during the period of childhood and adolescence."

It is clear from these words of Pius XI that the best preparation for marriage is the living of a good, Catholic life during the years prior to marriage. When young men and women from childhood have developed sturdy Catholic virtues in their character, with a deep faith in God and the love of God and neighbor in their souls, with a spirit of self-sacrifice, they will as a rule without much immediate preparation make a success of their married life. In years gone by the Church was satisfied with this long remote preparation for marriage and offered very little immediate preparation to young men and women getting married.

During the past thirty years, however, "subverters of marriage are entirely devoting to misleading the minds of men and corrupting their hearts, to making a mockery of matrimonial purity and extolling the filthiest of vices by means of books and pamphlets and other innumerable methods." The sacredness and integrity of the marriage bond

has been belittled. Marriage is proposed as a convenience. Many other ideas destructive of marriage and the family have taken root in the minds of men and the hearts of women.

In view of this subversion the Church is calling on Catholic young men and women to spend more time and effort in the immediate preparation of marriage, so that they will know Christ's teaching on marriage and the family, will be able to make a better choice of a partner in life who believes and lives the same truths of Christ and who, as a result of this faith in Christ's truths on marriage and the family, will have a truly Christian love and spirit of self-sacrifice which is so necessary for an enduring Christian family life.

To achieve these immediate purposes for the family The National Catholic Family Life Bureau, the Bishops' agency to promote Catholic family life throughout the nation, has prepared and is herewith presenting this Marriage Preparation Course to the bishops, priests and laity of the United States, and especially to the young men and women about to be married, so as to bring them to an understanding of the nature and duties of marriage, its importance in the mind of God for the welfare of human society both Church and State. It is the hope of the Family Life Bureau that through the proper use of this Marriage Preparation Course husbands and wives of the future will capture the nobility of parenthood, the sacredness of the child and will develop in themselves with the help of God the spirit of Christian love and sacrifice, the true basis of enduring family life.

The Family Life Bureau is indebted to the Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Irving A. DeBlanc and to the priests, religious and laity who so generously gave their ability to the completion of this Marriage Preparation Course.

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The Marriage Preparation Course
was developed under the auspices of
THE FAMILY LIFE BUREAU
National Catholic Welfare Conference

Marriage In Christ

"May the peace of Christ dwell always in your hearts and in your home."

—MARRIAGE RITUAL.

"This is a great sacrament."
(Eph. v:32.)

LESSON I

I

MARRIAGE IN CHRIST

COUPLES who are about to wed should seriously contemplate the sacred institution of marriage. They should carefully study its nature and impress upon their minds the great dignity that God has given it. They will find, in considering it, that even natural marriage has high excellence. But, to be sure, marriage in Christ, or Christian marriage, has far greater dignity and nobility.

There is particular reason for recalling the dignity of marriage today. It is found in the fact that the world in which we live today has in no small measure forgotten its great excellence. Pope Pius XI referred to this fact in his encyclical on *Christian Marriage.* Thus he spoke of "the great number of men who either entirely ignore or shamelessly deny the great sanctity of Christian wedlock" or who, as he added, "relying on the false principles of an utterly perverse morality, shamefully trample it under foot." And again he wrote: "When we consider the great excellence of chaste wedlock, it appears all the more regrettable that particularly in our day we should witness this divine institution often scorned, and on every side degraded."

It was to correct this most unfortunate situation that His Holiness gave to the world his encyclical on *Christian Marriage.* In its very first line he referred to the great excellence of this sacred institution with these words: "How great is the dignity of chaste wedlock." He then proceeded to list the reasons for its great dignity. Few things can be so important to those about to enter marriage as a lively consciousness of that dignity.

Probably the best way to develop such a consciousness is to impress upon the minds of those entering marriage the fundamentals that Almighty God has assigned it. To this end they should seek to understand both natural marriage and supernatural or Christian marriage. That is, they should seek to understand marriage as God originally established it and as a sacrament under Christianity. After all, Christian marriage, or marriage in Christ, is based on natural marriage. Christ, in elevating it to the supernatural dignity of a sacrament, did not destroy or change anything in natural marriage. He only added to it. He greatly elevated it.

I. Natural Marriage

To get an appreciation of natural marriage the following items should be considered: its divine institution; its natural sanctity; its nature as a special type of contract; its purposes; its properties.

Marriage a Divine Institution

To say that marriage is a divine institution is simply to state that it is a work of God Himself. Man did not institute marriage. God instituted it. It is a special design of the Almighty. All its essentials were assigned it by Him. From Him came its very institution, the purposes for whch it was constituted, the laws which govern it, and the blessings that flow from it to human society. In a word, marriage is God-made, not man-made. Since that is true, it follows that man has no right to change it, to adapt it to his own whims or wishes. He must accept it as God made it. Man may change his form of government. God has not instituted any particular kind of government. But he may not change marriage. That has been divinely designed for him.

The Sacred Scriptures tell us that marriage came to us as a design of the Creator from the very first days of man's existence on this earth. Thus the Book of Genesis manifests His divine influence over it in the account which it renders of the history of our parents. The account makes clear that God Himself directly brought about the union of Adam and Eve. He formed woman through a special act to be the companion and helpmate of man. He blessed the partnership of the two that each might aid the other in serving Him and thereby attain to supernatural happiness. Thus the first marriage of man and woman was not, as some today would have it, just an inescapable pairing of two people of opposite sex. It was a union contracted religiously under God's blessing and thereby destined to serve His purposes. Marriage, therefore, traces its origin directly to the social framework of Paradise and not to some vague social development in the history of mankind at a much later date. Needless to say, the very fact of its direct institution by God gives marriage special nobility and excellence.

The Sacredness of Marriage

Marriage is not only of divine origin. It also possesses the note of sanctity. That is true even of natural or nonsacramental marriage. From the very beginning of the human race has it been accepted as a sacred affair. This character of holiness was attributed to it in accord

with its divine institution and benediction by the Creator. So, too, was it considered holy because of the fact that it was ordained by the same Creator to the purpose of the procreation of a race of men destined from the beginning to worship and glorify the true God. With the exception of peoples who were either degraded or decadently refined, it appears from history that the gravity and majesty of marriage was always felt. It was understood in some measure at least that it consecrates those who receive it to share with the Divinity in His creative powers.

All historical religions, corroded though they may have been with error and superstition, have attributed to marriage the character of sanctity. Thus they have given constant testimony to the fact that mankind has not forgotten that the hand of God touched it in the beginning, that He continues to have an abiding interest in the state of this important institution, and that man inevitably thinks of it as linked with religion and holiness. Even independently of its elevation to the dignity of a sacrament, therefore, marriage is a sacred institution. It is not a purely secular affair, shorn of all sanctity or holiness. Only in our day, as our bishops pointed out in their pastoral letter of 1949, has it been considered such.

Actually, in the Old Testament, marriage was not only characterized by the note of sanctity but it was also considered a foreshadowing of the sacrament of matrimony of the New Law. That is, a reading of the Old Testament passages relating to marriage allows us to see the eventual sacramental nature of marriage in the plan of God. Several of its passages, for instance, dignify and sanctify marriage by employing it as an image of the relationship between God and the individual human soul. Thus the Canticle of Canticles has this for its very theme. It depicts the union of the human soul with God as a betrothal in which the lover and the beloved are united in holiness.

Furthermore, marriage, according to the Old Testament, can be taken as a foreshadowing of the Incarnation, or the union of the divine nature with human nature in the person of Jesus Christ. It can also be taken as a symbol of the future union of Christ with His Church in the Mystical Body. Thus earthly marriage, since it can be taken so readily as a symbol of the union between God and man in so many ways by writers under divine inspiration, must have possessed a holiness in the eyes of the Old Testament writers that prompted them to use it as a most favorable symbol to express the present and future relationship of God with man. The note of sanctity with which marriage is endowed in the Old Testament foreshadows the note of

grace with which marriage is endowed in the New Testament in the time of Christ in view of its institution as a sacrament.

The Marriage Contract

Marriage is essentially a contract. Rightly understood, it is a lawful and exclusive contract by which a man and woman give and accept a right over their bodies for the purpose of acts which are in themselves apt for the generation of children. A contract has to do with our wills; it is something in the rational or intellectual order rather than in the physical order. Hence there can be a true marriage without its being consummated by marital intercourse. The latter is not of the essence of marriage. But the contract is.

A Special Kind of Contract. The marriage contract is a special kind of contract. It differs in a variety of ways from other contracts. One way in which it differs is the fact that the consent expressed is so absolutely personal that no human power can supply it. The parents, for instance, cannot supply it. Nor can either the Church or the State. The individual must himself consent freely to the marriage contract or there is no marriage.

Again, the marriage contract is one of few contracts in which the rights granted and the obligations assumed and the essential conditions involved permit no determining power on the part of the contracting parties. Marriage, as we saw, is a divine and not a human institution. To enter upon a marriage contract, the parties must accept it as God instituted it. They are free to contract the marriage or not to contract it. But they are not free to change it in any way.

The contract of marriage is different from any other contract because its object is different. That object is life together, life in common. The words the contracting parties pronounce are nothing other than the exterior manifestation of the interior consent to give and to receive the rights over each other's body. Should the consent be lacking, the words are meaningless; there is no contract, no marriage.

It is this natural contract that Christ elevated to the great dignity of a sacrament.

The Purpose of Natural Marriage

It will also help to impress upon those who are looking forward to marriage its great dignity and excellence if they recall diligently the purposes which God assigned it. What are those purposes? Why did God give mankind the institution of marriage?

The Child, the Primary Purpose. The answer, insofar as its primary purpose is concerned, is that marriage, and also the family that is

based on it, exist for the child. The primary purpose is his procreation and training. This is really to say that if God had chosen some other way to propagate the human race upon earth, there is no reason to believe that there would be either marriage or, for that matter, two sexes—men and women. And God, of course, could have chosen any number of different ways to propagate the human race. For example, He might have created all mankind directly as he did the first man and woman. But, actually, He did not. The plan He chose was quite different. He instituted marriage. He made husbands and wives His coadjutors, His helpers in the propagation of the race. He made them, as Pope Pius XI expressed it in the encyclical on *Christian Marriage,* "ministers as it were of the Divine Omnipotence." As Holy Writ tells us, He made them male and female, and told them to increase and multiply. And He did more. He also made them His coadjutors, His agents or representatives in the training of the children of the race—in their training for this life and the next.

Even more should the high excellence of marriage, from the viewpoint of its twofold primary purpose, the begetting and training of children, be impressed upon one when he considers what the child is, and what he is trained for. For the child is a creature above all other visible creatures. He is, as Holy Writ tells us (Ps. 8:6), "a little less than the angels." He is a being created according to God's own image and likeness. And he is born not only for an earthly community. He is destined for eventual membership in God's eternal household.

Truly remarkable, therefore, is the fruit of marriage, children born by the omnipotent power of God through the cooperation of those bound in holy wedlock. Truly sublime is the dignity of marriage as seen in the primary purpose for which God established it, namely, the child.

The Secondary Purpose of Natural Marriage. The secondary purpose of marriage assigned it by Almighty God is also of high excellence. This purpose consists in two parts or elements closely related to each other. The first is the mutual assistance the parties must show each other. This shows itself in many ways—in mutual help in bearing life's hardships, in a common sharing of sacrifices, in facing difficulties together, in going down life's pathway hand in hand, seeking to fulfill jointly the respective duties the two assumed when they were united in wedlock. The other element forming the secondary purpose of marriage is the allaying of natural concupiscence. The spontaneous desire of the marital couple for each other's natural

consummation and completion in the sexual union is honorably and nobly satisfied in marriage. This intimate relationship is normally a powerful instrument for strengthening their union or the marriage bond. Rightly made use of, it fosters conjugal love. It plays an important role in promoting that unity between the spouses that is so essential to the proper training of the children within the family circle.

The Properties of Marriage

In view of the high purposes which God proposed for marriage, it cannot surprise us that He should also have assigned it some very special properties. By a property of marriage is meant a quality that cannot be dissassociated from its very concept as God instituted it for mankind. The Almighty gave marriage two such essential qualities, unity and indissolubility. By unity in marriage is meant monogamy or the fact that there can be but one husband and one wife. By indissolubility is meant permanence of the bond resulting from the marriage contract, or the fact that it cannot be broken by any human power.

It is well that those looking forward to marriage have a clear conception of these two properties of unity and permanence or indissolubility. Together they constitute the basis of an unbreakable bond. And an unbreakable bond is necessary for carrying out effectively the two great purposes appointed it by Almighty God; namely, the child's proper training and the mutual assistance the two spouses owe each other.

II. Christian Marriage

Remarkable as natural marriage is, Christian marriage unquestionably stands far above it. The latter is something supernatural. It is a sacrament, a grace-giving institution. It does not remain merely a union of two persons devoted to purposes founded in the natural law. It becomes a union with higher spiritual purposes and with supernatural means to carry them out. To be sure, all the features of the natural union remain. For Christ, as we noted before, in raising the marriage contract to the dignity of a sacrament, destroyed nothing that is good and true in natural marriage. What He did was to add something to it, to greatly elevate it. He made a natural contract itself a sacrament of the Church. He elevated what was a natural office to a supernatural plane. Whereas in the Old Law marriage was a foreshadowing of the Incarnation of Christ, under the New Law it became an instrument of His Redemption. By instituting it as a sacrament, Christ enabled it to bring the divine life of grace to man.

The Marriage Contract, a Sign Signifying and Causing Grace. Any sacrament is a sensible or outward sign instituted by Christ to produce the grace which it signifies. Thus all sacraments are signs of a practical nature, the application of a sign of an external nature being the cause of the grace given to the recipient. In the case of matrimony, the external sign of the internal grace conferred is the matrimonial contract, that is, the mutual consent of the parties externally manifested. The words themselves are the matter and form of the sacrament; the matter insofar as they signify the mutual surrender of conjugal rights; the form in that they express the mutual acceptance of the proferred rights. Thus it is that the parts that constitute the contract become the element that constitute the sacrament.

From this it can be seen that Christ did not institute a new outward sign as a basis of the sacrament. He merely accepted the sign which is of necessity an element of every valid matrimonial contract. To this external expression of consent He added a special significance and effect, namely, the power to signify and confer the inward gift of grace. From a simple sign, therefore, the matrimonial consent, given and accepted, becomes a sign to symbolize a grace which at the same time it confers on the person prepared to receive it. Hence it follows also that there can be no marriage between rightly baptized persons that is not likewise a sacrament. On the other hand, no unbaptized person can receive this or any other sacrament. The two, contract and sacrament, are inseparable.

The Graces of Matrimony. The conferring of grace is an effect common to all the sacraments of the New Law. While all of them produce sanctifying grace in the soul of the worthy recipient, they confer it with a view to accomplishing a particular effect. Sacramental grace, therefore, can be conveniently divided into sanctifying grace and that peculiar grace which varies with the purpose of the respective sacraments.

Like other sacraments, matrimony brings to its worthy recipients sanctifying grace and also the special grace, called actual grace, necessary to the married state. Being a sacrament of the living, it increases sanctifying grace in the soul of the well disposed. As to its special graces, it assures the supernatural assistance required to endure the burdens and obligations connected with the conjugal state. It gives the man and woman title to all the graces necessary for the long years of matrimonial life. It gives them aid in overcoming all the difficulties, disappointments, and sorrows that can arise from human contacts

to threaten their love, fidelity, or holiness as they live through the years The grace will only be wanting if the married people live their lives with no reference to God, thus placing obstacles to the divine help they might obtain through the sacrament.

The Ministers of the Sacrament. Each of the seven sacraments demands an earthly minister. By Church law the priest's presence is required under normal circumstances for the validity of the sacrament. But he is not the minister. Rather is he there in the role of witness and director of the ceremony. No action, no gesture of his is required as an essential part of the sacrament. The blessing he gives the couple is simply a complementary rite invoking God's benediction upon a marriage that has already been contracted.

The contracting parties of the marriage do well to bear clearly in mind this fact: they administer the sacrament. That means no less than that they confer grace upon each other. It means, therefore, that they are in a special manner members of the priesthood of the laity. For to administer grace is truly to exercise a priestly function.

Marriage and the Mystical Body

A highly important feature of Christian marriage that those looking toward it should bear in mind is its relationship to the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. St. Paul refers to this particular feature in his Epistle to the Ephesians. He there indicates two things. First of all, he notes that Christian marriage is a symbol of the Mystical Body or of the union of Christ with His Spouse, the Church. Secondly, he implies that it is an organic part of the Mystical Body, that it has special functions to perform in Christ's Visible Body, the Church. Both these facts give it great dignity.

Marriage, a Symbol of the Mystical Body: Its Implications. One cannot but be deeply impressed by St. Paul's teaching that in God's own design the marriage union is, under Christianity, symbolical of the great central mystery of Chritsianity, the Mystical Body; or, in other words, that the union of husband and wife in marriage is an image, or representation, of the union of Christ with the Church which He established for man's salvation. To be sure, this is mysterious doctrine. It is something we cannot fully comprehend. St. Paul himself states, in referring to it, that he is speaking of a great mystery. Nevertheless we can see at least some of its implications. Thus it implies, for instance, that the very bond that unites Christ and the Church is mirrored in the bond that unites husband and wife in Christian marriage. And that is an unbreakable bond. There is no

conceivable thought of a divorce between Christ and His Church. Again, it implies that the attributes or properties which characterize the union of Christ and the Church are reflected in the attributes or properties that characterize the union of husband and wife in marriage. One of these attributes is unity. There is one husband and one wife as there is one Christ and one Church. Here we have, then, a basis in the Scriptures for the properties of marriage already referred to, namely, unity and indissolubility.

If we wish to carry the parallel or contrast still further, we see the implication that the Christian family, which is based on Christian marriage, is in a sense the Mystical Body of Christ in miniature. Thus, the father is the head of that body and holds the place of Christ. The mother is the body itself or the Church. The children are the members of the body, as they are the members of the Church. Such is the dignity of Christian marriage. The father represents Christ. The mother represents the Church. The children represent the faithful in the Church. These are not figures of speech. They are not figments of the imagination. They are eternal truths clearly implied in Holy Writ and repeatedly set forth in the liturgy of the Church. They lend remarkable dignity to Christian marriage.

Practical Application of the Doctrine. Certainly there are in all this many and highly practical lessons for the members of Christian families and for those contemplating marriage or the foundation of their own homes. It should be obvious, for instance, that the relationships in such a Christian family should be most ideal. The words of St. Paul already indicate this, when he writes that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. If such is the case, then wives should, in turn, love their husbands as the Church loves Christ. As Pope Leo XIII stated, commenting on this passage in the Ephesians: "Let divine charity be the constant guide of their mutual relations both in him who rules and in her who obeys since each bears an image, he of Christ, she of the Church." And, by the same token, must one add that the children should look up to their fathers and mothers with somewhat the same reverence and respect that they are to show to Christ and His Church whom they symbolize. Likewise by that same token, are parents to be mindful of their great dignity as fathers and mothers. They are to be deeply conscious of their duties before God, of their duties toward each other and toward the children whom He has entrusted to their care. It should be needless to add that in such a home there is no room for bickering or strife, for marital or parental irresponsibility, for filial disrespect or for the modern scandal of child delinquency.

Marriage an Organic Part of the Church

Marriage is not only a type, or symbol, of the union of Christ with the Church. It also stands, as already stated, in an organic relation to the Mystical Body. It is, in a sense, an organ of the Church. It has special functions to perform in Christ's Mystical Body.

The encyclical of Pope Pius XII on the *Mystical Body of Christ* states in unmistakably clear words in what the special and organic relation between Christian marriage and the Church or Mystical Body consists. Two things are specified: one function of marriage is to extend the growth of the Church; a second is to see to the religious instruction of its growing members, the children. The following are the words of the encyclical: "Through matrimony, in which the contracting parties are ministers of grace to one another, provision is made for the external and regulated increase of the Christian society, and what is of greater importance for the correct religious instruction of the children without which the Mystical Body would be in grave danger."

First of all, then, the husband and wife, as members of the Church, beget children for the Church. In other words, as Christian spouses they have a special vital function in the Church or Body of Christ; they are dedicated to its extension or growth. Secondly they have the function of giving correct religious instruction to the children that are begotten lest, as the encyclical states, the Mystical Body "be in grave danger."

The Primary Purpose of Christian Marriage

Under the Christian dispensation, we see the primary purpose of marriage raised to a much higher level than it is under natural marriage. Under the former children are begotten for the Church of God. Under it, they are trained not only for an earthly community, but for God's eternal household. They are trained to become, as the marriage encyclical puts it, "fellow citizens of the saints."

Here, again, one sees the sublime dignity of Christian marriage. Christian spouses are cooperators with God in the great plan of the Redemption. They are that, first of all, by begetting children destined to be "fellow citizens of the saints and members of God's household," and, secondly, they are so by fulfilling the complementary function of training them or preparing them for that inestimably high estate. How much higher such marriage in Christ is than natural marriage it is difficult for us to grasp. Nor is it less difficult for us to grasp how much higher a family life will be that is based on the former rather than on the latter type of marriage. Here are high ideals for those who are contemplating marriage in Christ.

The Dignity of Christian Parenthood

Reference to the dignity of the child, the primary purpose of marriage, naturally brings to mind the dignity of Christian parenthood, of fatherhood and of motherhood. Most carefully should those looking toward marriage impress that dignity upon their minds.

The Dignity of Fatherhood. Holy Writ tells us that all fatherhood is of God. It is St. Paul who reminds us in his Epistle to the Ephesians that all fatherhood in heaven and on earth receives its name from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The words obviously mean that all honor, all dignity, all power attaching to earthly fatherhood are a representation or reflection of the fatherhood of God. That is sublime doctrine indeed.

There are a number of reasons for this dignity of fatherhood. One is the fact that God has ordained that the father be the head of the home. Another is the fact that the father, according to God's disposition, represents authority in the home—an authority which, like all other authority, is a reflection of the authority of God. Again, there is the fact that under Christianity the father represents Christ in the home.

The Church has always recognized this high excellence of fatherhood under Christianity and has taught a profound respect for paternity. Furthermore, she has gloried in applying the revered title of father as a mark of special distinction. Her head on earth—the head of Christ's great "family," as St. Paul calls the Church—is esteemed and revered by all her children as the "Holy Father." Her bishops and priests are considered the spiritual fathers of their flocks. Religious orders of men in the Church almost universally call their superiors by the title of father. The early teachers and writers of the Church were known as the Apostolic Fathers. A title of particularly high distinction that she confers at times is that of "Father of the Church." And so there are other ways in which the Church glories in the use of the term "father." She has great respect for Christian fatherhood.

One day St. Augustine preached to a group of fathers of his diocese. In addressing them he used this salutation: "My dear fellow bishops." Then he went on to say to them: "Each and every one of you have in the home the bishop's office, to see to it that neither his wife nor his son nor his daughter nor even his servant fall away from truth. For they are bought with a great price." And what is "the bishop's office?" Unquestionably it is the care of souls. Hence St. Augustine really implied by his words that, much as the bishop is accountable

to God for the spiritual welfare of the members of his diocesan flock, so is the father accountable to God for the spiritual welfare of his family flock. Fittingly indeed may this teaching of the Saint be impressed on their minds by those who are entering Christian wedlock.

The Dignity of Motherhood. With the coming of Christ upon this earth great dignity was vouchsafed to motherhood, and indeed to womanhood generally. It had not always been so. Under paganism in pre-Christian days, respect for womankind was often sadly lacking. But on the very threshold of Christianity we see a change. The story of that change is a very thrilling and consoling one. It tells us, namely, how Christ, the God-man coming upon this earth to redeem fallen mankind, chose for his mother a woman whom he made the greatest of his creatures in heaven and on earth. For her sake He raised up womankind generally from the degradation of paganism. He made the wife and mother the partner and equal of the husband and the heart of the home world. He dignified all motherhood in the motherhood of Mary, the mother of God.

Well may those recall who are about to marry and enter upon family life in Christ that it was then that there appeared for the first time on earth that most beautiful creation of earth, the Christian home, that unique sphere of woman that made her, in the capacity of mother, the greatest power for good on earth, second only to the Church of God of which she is the symbol.

Genuine respect for womankind and motherhood has ever been most closely linked with reverence toward the all-pure Mother of God. But unfortunately in our day many no longer recognize Mary as the Mother of God and pay her honor and tribute as such. As a result her great influence has in large part been lost to womankind and the family. Well may those looking toward marriage in Christ work to restore respect for Her through a renewed devotion to Her. It would mean very much to themselves, to their homes and to society.

The Secondary Purpose of Marriage in Christ. Higher, too, by far than in natural marriage is the secondary purpose of marriage in Christ. Speaking of natural marriage we referred to the secondary purpose as mutual aid which the spouses must render each other. Under Christian marriage that mutual aid must above all be taken in the spiritual sense of mutual help toward each other's sanctification. As the encyclical on *Christian Marriage* states, there must be under the sacred bond of Christian marriage a mutual interior or spiritual molding of the two spouses, a determination and ambition to perfect each other spiritually. That is to say that, after the two have made

their solemn promises to take each other as man and wife till death, the two must walk hand in hand—not alone as before marriage, but together—along the road that leads to their eternal destiny. They must henceforth live a partnership that aims at an eternal goal. Marriage is their vocation. It is their way of life. Through it they are to work out their eternal salvation. They are to do so, not alone but together, not singly but in unison. It should be an inviting consideration for those entering marriage. We shall return to it when we discuss conjugal love. For the outstanding purpose of the love of Christian spouses is their mutual sanctification.

TEAR OFF ALONG DOTTED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *Why is there special need today for contemplating marriage in order to develop a consciousness of its great dignity?*

2. *Tell, briefly, how a consciousness of the dignity of marriage can be developed.*

3. *Distinguish natural and supernatural marriage.*

4. *What is the basis for saying that marriage is a divine or God-made rather than a human or man-made institution? What does that imply?*

5. *Is natural marriage sacred or holy or is it just a profane or secular thing? What proofs can you give for your answer?*

6. *What is meant by saying that marriage is essentially a contract? What are some of the reasons for saying that it is a special kind of contract?*

7. *Why did God give mankind the institution of marriage? In other words, what are its purposes?*

8. *Could God have propagated the human race without the institution of marriage? Indicate how the purposes which God assigned to marriage show forth its dignity or excellence.*

9. *What is a property of marriage? What two major properties did God give marriage? Are they related in any way to the purposes of marriage?*

10. *When God instituted the sacrament of marriage, what did He do to natural marriage?*

11. *It is Catholic teaching that all sacraments are sensible or perceptible signs which cause grace. What constitutes such a sign in the case of marriage?*

12. *Distinguish the two types of grace that flow from the sacrament of matrimony. What purposes does its actual grace serve?*

13. *Who administers the sacrament of matrimony? What is the function of a priest in its administration?*

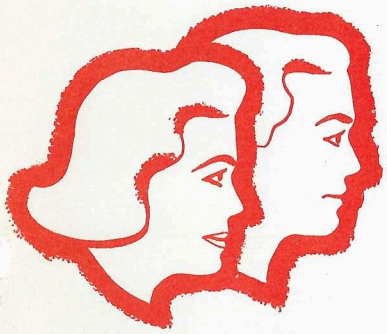
14. *Indicate some of the implications of St. Paul's teaching that the union of husband and wife in Christian marriage is a symbol of the union of Christ with His spouse, the Church.*

15. *What two special functions do Christian spouses perform in the Church or Mystical Body of Christ.*

16. *Distinguish the primary purpose of natural and of supernatural or sacramental marriage.*

17. *Show the difference between the secondary purpose of natural marriage and of sacramental marriage.*

Conjugal Love



"... holy and pure love
as Christ loved the Church."

ENCY. ON *Christian Marriage.*

LESSON II

II

CONJUGAL LOVE

By CONJUGAL love is meant married love, the love of husband and wife.

It is highly important that a man and woman looking toward marriage have a correct and clear notion of this type of love. No less important is it that, once they have entered marriage, they cultivate true conjugal love. The success of their marriage, the fulfillment of their ultimate purpose in life, will depend exceedingly much on that.

False Notions Abroad

Undoubtedly many today enter marriage with false notions of love. Our secularized and materialistic civilization is characterized by such false notions. The great media of communication and education of the day—the press, the moving picture, the radio—constantly disseminate them. In fact it is hardly too much to say that these media rarely give the correct view. For the most part, the term "love" is taken simply to mean a romantic or highly sentimental type of love, or the natural physical attraction between a man and a woman. Taken in the latter case, the subject is at times treated with a measure of reverence. But more frequently is it treated either farcically or obscenely. Not infrequently it is reduced to hardly more than brute passion. For the most part, it is a far cry from this modern love to genuine human love. And certainly it is a far cry from it to the supernatural love that should characterize marriage in Christ. In this situation is to be found the basis of many evils that afflict marriage in our time.

The Church's Reaction

In the face of this circumstance, the Church is increasingly giving her attention to the subject of love. Her scholars have studied the nature of love generally and of conjugal love more specifically. Her theologians have explained its supernatural aspects. Her leaders have criticized false notions of love and have urged the faithful to live in harmony with what is genuine love. Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical or world letter on *Christian Marriage,* referred to the subject repeatedly. Since he was writing of marriage, he had in mind in doing so con-

jugal love or the love of husband and wife. We may well recall some of his words at this point. The following, which he wrote immediately after a discussion of "conjugal faith" or fidelity in married life, are particularly pertinent:

> This conjugal faith, however, which is most aptly called by St. Augustine the "faith of chastity," blooms more freely, more fully and more nobly, when it is rooted in that more excellent soil, the love of husband and wife which pervades all duties of married life and holds pride of place in Christian marriage. For matrimonial faith demands that husband and wife be joined in an especially holy and pure love not as adulterers love each other, but as Christ loved the Church. This precept the Apostle laid down when he said: "Husbands love your wives as Christ also loved the Church," that Church which of a truth He embraced with a boundless love not for the sake of His own advantage but seeking only the good of His Spouse. The love then of which we are speaking is not that based on the passing lust of the moment nor does it consist in pleasing words only, but in the deep attachment of the heart which is expressed in action, since love is proved by deeds. This outward expression of love in the home demands not only mutual help but must go further: it must have as its primary purpose that man and wife help each other day by day in forming and perfecting themselves in the interior life, so that through their partnership in life they may advance ever more and more in virtue, and above all that they may grow in true love toward God and their neighbor, on which indeed, "dependeeth the whole law and the prophets." For all men of every condition, in whatever honorable walk of life they may be, can and ought to imitate that most perfect example of holiness placed before man by God, namely Christ Our Lord, and by God's grace to arrive at the summit of perfection, as is proved by the example set us by many saints.

Those words of Pope Pius XI may well be read time and again by all entering upon married life. They are filled with high ideals indeed. We shall refer back to parts of them as we continue on with the development of our topic. For the present we turn our attention to an examination of the nature of love in general. After that we shall discuss more specifically the nature of conjugal love.

The Meaning of Love

The term love is at times used rather loosely. Thus, it is not uncommon to hear people say that they love a certain thing. They may be referring, for instance, to a dish of food. What they mean is that they have an inclination for it, are attracted by it, desire it. More usually, however, the term is applied to persons. Two human

beings are said to love each other. Here we have something quite different. The term then means that the two wish each other well and wish to do good to each other. It might be added that, while largely a matter of the will, manifestations of love through external signs very commonly accompany the well-wishing. Very commonly, too, love is accompanied by emotion or affection. That, however, is not necessary. There can be genuine and deep love without emotion.

Taking the word in this general sense of well-wishing and doing good to a particular person, the term may apply to persons of the same or opposite sex, to married or unmarried individuals, to relatives or non-relatives. Actually, there will be some differences in the love between individuals in these various categories or classifications. But in all cases there will be this basic fact: it will be a love between human beings, between fellowmen. It will be a love between beings made after the image and likeness of Almighty God, and therefore endowed with intelligence and free will.

Conjugal Love: Its Main Elements

Our interest here is mainly in conjugal love, the love, as we said, between husband and wife. In some ways at least this love is fundamentally different from any other kind of love. What, then, is its specific nature? What are its ingredients, its constitutive elements? What are some of its major qualities or characteristics?

To understand the nature of conjugal love we must know something of the nature of man. Man is a being composed of body and soul. Because he has a body, he is not like a disembodied spirit; he is not the same as an angel. Because he has a rational soul, he is not like an animal. Actually, however, he participates in some measure in the nature of both animal and angelic spirit. Because of his body, he feels and grows as does the animal. Because of his soul, he understands as does the angel.

Both the physical or physiological and the spiritual or psychological elements in man play a part in conjugal love. Thus, there should be union of the souls of the spouses. They should be one in mind and heart, one in understanding and will. They should aim for and work together toward common goals. Then there should be physical or bodily union. The physical or sensitive element in man, the mutual physical attraction of the pair, manifests itself through various signs of endearment and through physical union. In marriage alone may

love find its complete expression or consummation in the sex relation. It is of husband and wife that Holy Writ says that they shall be two in one flesh. Their physical expression of love is a symbol of a deeper spiritual union.

The physical and the spiritual or psychological elements of conjugal love are not on the same plane. Just as the soul is superior to the body, so is the psychic element in married love superior to the physical or sensitive element. The psychic, or spiritual, also is more permanently and firmly established than the physical. Love that is based only on physical sex will wane as physical attraction lessens. It is not likely to survive real trials and hardships. Genuine spiritual love, however, will last even after physical attraction wanes. It will remain even should lowering clouds appear on the domestic horizon, even should storms of adversity arise.

To say that the spiritual element of love is higher than the physical is not to infer that the latter is not something good and in every sense worthy. It is good and worthy. Rightly used, it is the handiwork of God. The sex relation of the spouses is God's chosen medium for the propagation of the human race. Without it there would be no real reason for marriage. By no means, therefore, is it to be underrated or scorned. God made man the human being that he is. Not only the soul but also the human body, which is the source of physical sex attraction in man, is the work of His hand. It is something holy. Indeed, St. Paul refers to it as the "temple of the Holy Ghost." The conjugal relation, as St. Thomas specifically teaches, is not only commendable but also meritorious. It is a means of sanctification.

While the summit and ultimate fulfilment of the physical love is found in the complete merging of man and woman in the sexual union, that physical union does not actually occupy so prominent a position in love and marriage as young people usually think. But it is nonetheless vitally necessary. And it plays a truly important role in the life of husband and wife. "It is the body which gives form to love, making it an expression of the whole personality and calling forth in the partner a corresponding wholeness of response."

Both the spiritual and the physical, then, have their place. As Baron von Gagern puts it, the right attitude toward sexual love is only possible "when a right relationship to one's own personality has been established, when the soul is not denied or neglected and when there is no negation of the body and the sex element" *(The Meaning of Life and Marriage)*.

Qualities of Conjugal Love

What are some of the qualities or properties of true conjugal love? Certainly outstanding among them are a spirit of giving and a desire for unity. Linked most intimately with these are such notes as permanence, exclusiveness, respect or reverence, and unselfishness. Where these ingredients are found vital and strong in the love of husband and wife, both happiness and a sound wedded life are assured. Where they are lacking, or where they are enfeebled or weak, or counterfeit, evil results are bound to be reflected in the mutual relations of the spouses and their family life generally.

The Spirit of Giving. The idea of giving has long been identified by mankind with the notion of true love. To love is to give, to will and desire the good of the one loved. According to this view, a lover's happiness is found not in his own satisfaction but rather in the happiness of the one he loves. His love is generous and unselfish. It yields no place to selfishness. He does not seek to take for himself; he only seeks to give of himself.

The Spirit of Unity. So, too, has a spirit of unity always been recognized as an important quality of genuine love. The true lover desires to be united with his beloved. His love draws him out of himself. It causes him to long for unity. He wishes to be with the object of his love, and to be so permanently. The unity he longs for is one that can never be destroyed. The true lover finds it unthinkable that his love should not endure. When lovers, however, as is often the case today, do not claim such permanence for their love, the natural psychological conditions for a genuine wholehearted love are not fulfilled.

Model of Christian Love

Christ's love for His Spouse, the Church, has been set up by St. Paul as the model for the love of husband and wife in Christian marriage. "Husbands," he says, "love your wives even as Christ loved the Church." What, then, was the nature of this love of Christ for the Church? Did it contain the two great properties or qualities to which reference has just been made—a spirit of giving and a desire for unity?

The answer is definitely in the affirmative. Certainly the love of Christ for the Church, for those whom He came to save, meant giving. He died for us. He give His all, even to the last drop of His blood. As St. Paul says, "He emptied himself" (Phil. 2: 7). Greater gift, greater generosity, greater sacrifice could not be imagined, even when the Almighty God is the giver and the lover.

So, too, was the love of Christ a love that longed for unity. He wanted unity with His Spouse, the Church; He wanted unity among its members and with Himself. And it was the highest type of unity that He sought, a unity that was to be modeled after the oneness of God, the unity of the Holy Trinity. This was what He prayed for on that momentous occasion, the Last Supper. "Holy Father, keep in my name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are . . . Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me, that all may be one in Us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17: 11, 20, 21). The unity that is a mark of Christ's love for His Church is found, of course, in the unity of the Church, His Mystical Body. Christ is one with His Church as the head is one with the body. The Church lives with the life of Christ, it works for His glory, it puts its trust in His strong love.

A love of giving, then, even to the last drop of His blood, and a love of unity, finding realization in the oneness even of members in a single Mystical Body, that is the love of Christ for His Spouse, the Church. And that is the love that St. Paul dared point to as the model for husband and wife in Christian marriage. It is an ideal model indeed. It bespeaks a love that does not falter in the face of any sacrifice that will be demanded. It is a love that finds its happiness for the spouses in giving and sacrificing, gladly and wholeheartedly, for each other and for their children. It is a love that finds its joy in unity, a unity of heart and soul as well as body, a unity by which husband and wife are no longer two apart, but two in one, a unity that tolerates no separation so long as both shall live.

The Selfish and Unselfish

Interwoven in the texture of love are threads of both selfishness and unselfishness, of both self-love and other-love or altruism. It is most essential that the latter be kept to the fore. Where that is done, one can expect a successful marriage and one that will help develop in the husband and wife in high measure the essential Christian note of love of God and neighbor. On the other hand, where selfishness or love of self, becomes dominant, the marriage union is certain to suffer. This matter is so important that we may well analyze further here the constituent elements in human love, and more specifically the elements of conjugal love, for those who are looking forward to marriage, distinguishing the unselfish and selfish ones.

In doing this we shall follow the penetrating analysis left us by the late Monsignor John M. Cooper. In it he places great emphasis on the note of unselfishness. Distinguishing, first of all, such elements in love as reverence for the loved one and the impulse to reveal one's deeper self and to receive deeper confidence, he goes on to say: "Most diagnostic of all, love is altruistic, unselfish, seeking the welfare and happiness of the one loved. Love lacking willingness to give up its own pleasure and convenience within reason for the sake of the loved one is a contradiction in terms. Where unselfishness is wanting, love is not. The degree of unselfishness is the best single measure of the degree of love itself. This holds true of love of any kind—parental, filial, fraternal, amicable, and so forth—and peculiarly of premarital love between the sexes." [1]

The Major Elements of Conjugal Love. Speaking of conjugal love as it manifests itself in its complete form in the family, Monsignor Cooper distinguished the following three major elements: passion or the physical sex urge, conjugal love in its spiritual or psychological form, and parental love. The first of these—passion, signifying the mere physical side of sex—is an intermittent phenomenon that is primarily, if not exclusively, self-centered or selfish. The second—conjugal love, taking the term here as exclusive of passion or the physical—is in part selfish and in part unselfish. Selfish elements in it, for instance, are a desire for companionship and for exclusive possession. Unselfish elements, on the other hand, are sympathy, devotion, constancy, chivalry, and self-sacrifice. The third—the parental impulse, manifesting itself in the desire for children and in self-sacrificing care, protection and love of offspring — is thoroughly unselfish. It is here, then, in the sacrificial devotion of the father and mother to offspring that we really have the triumph of the unselfish over the selfish part of love. In parental love, one might say, conjugal love is really completed. In it the mutual love of husband and wife is enriched and deepened and made dominantly unselfish. Without it, their love remains stunted and in arrested form. Without it family life is incomplete.

The Interplay of the Elements of Conjugal Love. While the three elements of love between spouses—passion or its physical aspects, conjugal love or its spiritual aspects, and the parental impulse—can indeed be distinguished, they should actually be found combined in

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[1] Cooper, John M., *Religion Outlines for Colleges,* Vols. I and IV, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press.

wedded life. In other words, there should be an interplay of the three. Where that is the case, even the more selfish qualities can serve a good purpose. They will then be duly subordinated to the unselfish. As Monsignor Cooper has put the matter: "The interplay of these factors in marriage and domestic life is part of a wondrous and kindly divine strategy by which the selfish hungers and self-regarding trends in love itself are made use of, and built upon by God for the propagation of the human race, and the training of parents themselves in unselfishness. The motives and forces that impel men and women to marry and found homes are more commonly passion and love's desire for companionship; that is, the selfish and self-regarding factors. But marriage itself and homemaking are of their very nature sacred and unselfish; they fulfill unselfish tasks, and train mates in the practice of unselfishness. Through marriage, love of self is, as it were, changed by a divine alchemy into love of neighbor, and egotistic forces are turned into altruistic channels . . . The unselfish love between husband and wife is sustained, fed and further purified by their common sacrificial and unselfish devotion to the care of their children . . . Marriage and homemaking, and child-bearing are therefore a lifelong and consecrated training in love for God and neighbor."

The great importance of this should be evident when one recalls that the very essence of Christianity is love of God and fellowman, that to it Christ reduced all the Law and the Prophets.

Unchastity Stamps in Selfishness. Great harm comes to the family where, instead of interplay of the aforementioned factors in marriage and domestic life, the selfish factors are isolated from the unselfish ones, and are given emphasis. Love then becomes a powerfully disintegrating force and very serious harm is certain to result. Such is the case whenever unchastity in any of its many forms holds forth. Unchaste love is selfish love. It is counterfeit love. It is bound to do harm. "All forms of unchastity—incontinence, and liberties among the unmarried, solitary sin, unchastity in thought, imagination and desire—have this in common that they isolate sex pleasure, the self-centered and selfish elements in the whole (love) complex from the unselfish and sacred elements. They satisfy self-centered and selfish cravings only, and hence so far as they go—and they go far—they stamp in and reinforce egoism, self-centredness, selfishness, all in fact that is opposed to unselfish love of God and neighbor. They divide passion from the higher elements in love and parenthood, instead of tying it up to these elements and utilizing it as a, or better, the means

of leading up to the development of these unselfish and sacred elements. They tend of their nature to deflect the streams of character from pure unselfish channels into starkly self-centered and selfish channels. They strip passion of the normal controls and correctives and counterchecks placed upon it by God and leave it shorn and naked in all its grossness and animality. They reap the pleasures of passion while selfishly evading the sacrifices and responsibilities of love and parenthood. They, thus, like other forms of selfishness, make the unchaste man or woman a sponging parasite. They are a betrayal of the racial trusteeship that sex is. They frustrate and set at naught and sneakingly elude a fundamental and seemingly the divine plan for a higher moral training, for the development and growth of unselfishness." [2]

In a word, an unchaste person is a selfish person. Where there is unchastity, there selfishness abounds, there genuine love is lacking. Where that is the case, the marital bond weakens, the family fails to function effectively. It may even totally disintegrate.

The reverse side of the picture, chaste living, is as attractive and encouraging as the other is discouraging. "The virtue of chastity forwards and protects all that marriage and the home stands for. It is a supreme form of unselfishness. God, in commanding chastity as a virtue and in forbidding any breach of chastity as a mortal sin, has in mind the protection of the deepest and most sacred rights and interests of marriage and the family that is built thereon."

The Cultivation of Love

Conjugal love, like other love, can grow weak. It can be starved. It needs to be nourished. It must be fed. Those looking toward marriage should bear this in mind. Perhaps more particularly should they keep in mind that the food for nourishing their love will consist, not so much in great or extraordinary things as in the little and ordinary things of daily life. It will consist, for instance, in such commonplace things as leisure hours spent in companionship, daily tasks shared together, common interest in the training of the children, home pleasures enjoyed and daily difficulties faced shoulder to shoulder, prayers said and devotions practiced in unison. An endowment of such interests in common in the family circle provides a storehouse, so to speak, on which the spouses can constantly draw in order to nourish and strengthen their love.

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[2] Cooper, John M., *Religion Outlines for Colleges,* Course I. (2nd Ed., Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1935, pp. 172-173.)

Perhaps a special word may well be added, by way of practical example, about recreational interests, interests in children, and religious interests.

Shared Recreational Interests. Not the least important of companion interests among both spouses and children are those of play or recreation. Simple and inexpensive amusements participated in together within the family circle furnish many of the happiest moments in the lives of the members and serve as few other things can to nourish love and to bind husband and wife, parent and child, together in harmonious unison. The sentiments aroused thereby promote unity of heart, of thought and purpose. They make for loyalty to the family unit on the part of its members. They strengthen the unifying bond of love.

Interest in Children. As already noted, conjugal love is completed when it merges with parental love as children come into the home to bless the marriage union. Beyond any doubt the play of the parental impulse enormously increases the matrimonial capital of the wedded pair. Parenthood means a new and deep source of joy for the spouses. It means a love constantly fed and sustained by the parents' sacrifices and their unselfish services to their children. The natural and deep sympathies of a father and mother altogether normally center in children. They are the parents' treasures and the main sources of their mutual sympathy. And next to the possession of a treasured interest there is no richer experience than sharing it with another to whom it means the same. Because they must sacrifice together for their little ones and must plan together and work out in unison their destiny, parents find in them a mutual interest more attractive than any other force within the domestic world.

When the first child comes into the home it opens up a new source of keenest interest and deepest joy in husband and wife. It adds a new element of common sympathy between them. It enriches their mutual love. The genuine sympathies and common interests that find a place in a home blessed by little ones strengthen the fundamental bond of love and lend much influence toward building a peaceful and contented domestic world. It has always been the experience of the human race that the average man and woman find in parenthood one of the greatest sources of joy and satisfaction. There are few things more engrossing than the triumphs connected with the development of their children. There is nothing that so naturally and effectively enriches their mutual love.

In this connection one should easily see the risks run and the harm frequently done in our day by those who advise young married couples to postpone the begetting of children until they have been married for some years. Even aside from all questions of morality that might be involved in heeding such advise should it be vigorously rejected by any and all couples who value their marriage and hope for its ultimate success.

Religious Interests in Common. In speaking of strengthening love we must not overlook the interests of God and of religion. When all is said and done, human love needs more than human interests if it is to flourish and successfully fulfill its purposes. Divine love must be closely intertwined with human love if the latter is to remain truly sound and lasting. God's interests must be given due attention within the family sanctuary if marriage and home life are to be truly satisfying and successful. Here we see the reason for such practices as the following so often recommended today: prayers and devotions in common in the home; family group Communion; family assistance at Mass; family retreats; family religious celebrations in the home.

Conjugal Love and Mutual Sanctification

The immediately foregoing consideration may well recall the words of Pope Pius XI's encyclical on *Christian Marriage,* already quoted, in which he speaks of the primary purpose of conjugal love. That purpose is the mutual sanctification of the spouses. "This outward expression of love in the home," he wrote, "demands not only mutual help but must go further: it must have as its primary purpose that man and wife help each other day by day in forming and perfecting themselves in the spiritual life, so that through their partnership in life they may advance ever more and more in virtue and above all that they may grow in that true love of God and their neighbor, on which 'dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets'. For all men of every condition, in whatever honorable walk of life they may be," he added, "can and ought to imitate that most perfect example of holiness placed before man by God, namely, Christ Our Lord, and by God's grace to arrive at the summit of perfection, as is proved by the example set us by many saints."

Here, of course, we have conjugal love in its fullest Christian sense, that is, as supernaturally elevated and perfected and consecrated by the sacrament of matrimony. It is in this sense that Father Ivo Zeiger takes it when he refers to it as "that love in which the spouses united by the sacrament and aided by sacramental grace, by common effort

and zeal are informed, both themselves and their children, with heavenly virtues, tend to a supernatural end, and so in a more perfect manner than is otherwise possible, represent that most chaste and most holy love with which Christ embraces the Church."

The sacrament of matrimony affects conjugal love in a number of different ways. Thus, it affects the manner in which it operates. Again, it affects some of its qualities, for instance, its permanence and exclusiveness. But we are interested here in still another way in which it exerts an influence over it, namely, insofar as it affects the end and purpose which it has in view, the mutual sanctification of the spouses so clearly stated in Pope Pius XI's words in the encyclical on *Christian Marriage*.

Love, it has well been said, is not two people staring at each other but together looking in the same heavenly direction. "True Christian married love occurs when two apostolic people meet on their way to heaven and marry."

That mutual sanctification should be the purpose of conjugal love in sacramental marriage can come as no surprise. Indeed it should be expected. The true lover wishes the very best for his beloved. But the best possible thing one can wish any human being is sanctity. Hence, altogether logically should the love of husband and wife center in their mutual sanctification, and indeed first and foremost so.

That mutual sanctification is as a matter of fact the purpose of conjugal love is clearly attested by Holy Writ. We have already referred to the words in which this is done, the words of St. Paul: "Husbands love your wives as Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for her that he might sanctify her." According to them, as we noted, Christ's love for His Spouse, the Church, is the standard or model for the love of Christian spouses. But the purpose of Christ's love for the Church was that He might sanctify Her. Hence, the husband, in imitation of Him, should also love his wife in order to sanctify her. He, as we have seen, represents Christ in the home. And no less should the wife love her husband in order to sanctify him. She represents Holy Mother Church in their marriage. And the very purpose of the Church is the sanctification of souls.

How is this to be done? Fundamentally, in the same way as any process of sanctification is carried out; namely, through the acquisition or the increase of the divine life of grace in the soul. And yet there is a difference. In marriage there is not a question of one individual working alone, but of two doing so hand in hand—together. That is,

in marriage sanctification is a process by which the spouses help each other to maintain and increase the divine life of grace within themselves. To be sure this does not mean that their love can induce husband and wife to produce grace directly in the soul of each other, as is the case with Christ's love for His Church. Rather is it done indirectly. It is done by their love prompting each other to take advantage of every opportunity in their married life to lead each other to seek the graces appropriate to the sacrament of matrimony. It is done, on the one hand, by both of them diligently avoiding most carefully anything and everything that might lessen in any way each other's nearness to God and, on the other hand, by putting forth positive efforts to bring each other nearer to Him. It is done by one spouse consistently seeking to dispose the other to utilize or act upon the occasions of grace to which the sacrament of matrimony which they have received gives them a title. Duly cooperating with this grace, made available to them through the sacrament, will enable them properly to fulfill the duties of their state of life and thereby gain merit for heaven.

Here indeed, in the work of mutual sanctification, is a field of endeavor for true conjugal love. It would be difficult to conceive of a higher form of expression of this love than that of spouses acting as the occasions whereby their partners in marriage would be aroused and prompted to take advantage of those actual graces to which they are entitled.

The Reciprocal Relations Between Grace and Conjugal Love

The foregoing should show the close relationship between grace and conjugal love in sacramental marriage. The love of marriage is indeed a demanding love, a love characterized by much sacrifice. But, with the help of the grace of the sacrament of matrimony the sacrifice can be made and, as a result, the ends of marriage can be faithfully carried out. The grace of the sacrament and conjugal love are most closely related. The grace of matrimony safeguards the love of marriage, and the love of marriage safeguards grace. Without the grace of the sacrament the demands of marriage cannot be satisfactorily met nor the object of conjugal love, the mutual sanctification of the spouses, successfully carried out.

The lesson in this for Christian spouses should be crystal clear. They should ever cooperate most faithfully with the grace of the sacrament. Their mutual love for each other should prompt them to encourage each other to do this in fullest measure. They may rest

assured that God's grace will not fail them if they do so. His love for them will be all-sufficient. But they must return His love with their love. They must prove themselves worthy of this Supreme Lover and Benefactor. If they do that they will also prove themselves in highest measure worthy of each other.

TEAR OFF ALONG DOTTED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *What are some of the false notions of love that are abroad today?*
2. *What is meant when we say that two human beings love each other?*
3. *What is meant by conjugal love?*
4. *Are both the physical and the spiritual elements in conjugal love necessary? Which is the more important of the two elements? Which is the higher?*
5. *In what great document of our day does Pope Pius XI remind that husband and wife are to love each other as Christ loved the Church?*
6. *What does the pontiff say in that document to be primary purpose of the love of husband and wife?*
7. *Explain what is meant by the two great qualities of love, the spirit of giving and the desire for unity.*
8. *Show how these two qualities are typified in Christ's love for His Church, the model for the love of Christian spouses.*
9. *Indicate some selfish elements in conjugal love. Indicate some unselfish ones. Can the selfish ones be turned to good use? How?*
10. *Why do all forms of unchastity reinforce selfishness or egoism?*
11. *What are some ordinary things of daily life that may nourish love?*
12. *Show specifically how recreational interests enjoyed in common cultivate love.*
13. *How do parents' interests in their children reinforce or nourish love?*
14. *Give examples of religious interests in ocmmon in the home that may promote love.*

15. *Why should it be expected that the mutual sanctification of spouses be the primary purpose of their love?*

16. *Show from the teaching of St. Paul that mutual sanctification of the spouses is meant to be the primary purpose of the love of husband and wife.*

17. *How do husband and wife carry out this work of sanctifying each other?*

18. *Explain the relationship between grace and conjugal love.*

Legal Safeguards of Marriage

LESSON III

III

LEGAL SAFEGUARDS OF MARRIAGE

It should not be surprising that in view of the great importance of marriage to society and to the individual it is regulated and protected by a number of laws. Both Church and State have marriage laws. Viewed as a civil contract, that is, considered from the viewpoint of civil effects, marriage is subject to state law; viewed as a sacrament, it is subject to church law. In both instances, the purpose of the legal regulations enacted is to erect safeguards around marriage, whether as a contract or as a sacrament.

The Sacrament Subject to the Church

The real basis for the Church's concern about the regulation of marriage is the fact that in the case of the baptized it is a sacrament, a spiritual thing. And the spiritual comes under the authority or jurisdiction of the Church. Temporal matters, on the other hand, are the concern of the State. It should be obvious, then, that marriage in the case of the baptized is primarily a concern of the Church, while that of the unbaptized comes under the jurisdiction of the civil power.

We shall first of all deal in the following with the Church's regulations regarding marriage, particularly those that are of more general or universal concern to Catholics. Then we shall give attention to some of the marriage laws of the State.

I. The Church's Marriage Laws

The Church has developed an excellent body of marriage laws over the centuries. Some of them repeat the law of God, while others prescribe merely a ruling of the Church. These laws, as they exist today, are found in what is commonly referred to as the Church's Code of Canon Law.

Preliminary Steps

Before a marriage takes place the Church requires certain formalities to be observed. Such are: the pastor's investigation, the securing of

necessary documents, the publication of the banns, the giving of instructions.

The Prenuptial Investigation. The Church carefully investigates marriages before performing the wedding ceremony. This is a matter of obligation for the pastor. It should not be misunderstood by the parties concerned. There is no reason to frown upon it. The purpose of the investigation is simply to establish their freedom to enter marriage. To this end, the pastor must acquaint himself concerning such matters as their age, religion, freedom from forbidden near-kin relationship, and other matters that might render the marriage either illicit or invalid.

Commonly today a formal prenuptial investigation form is made use of. This may vary somewhat from diocese to diocese but always consists of a list of questions that are proposed individually to the prospective bride and the prospective groom and usually cover such matters as the following: 1) the usual points of identification, that is, names of parents, age, etc., and religious background; 2) facts that would indicate the presence or absence of any one of the various impediments to marriage; 3) an examination of each as to his or her acceptance of the obligations of married life, and their free and unconditioned consent to the essential properties of the marriage contract. Their answers are sworn and subscribed to by each party individually and the record of same is kept in the files of the parish.

Prenuptial Instructions. The pastor is required to give the prospective bride and groom instructions to assure on their part sufficient knowledge of their duties, by truly Catholic standards, to justify their contemplated step. In some cases at least, this may call for a fairly prolonged instruction. In all cases, the priest should remind the parties of the seriousness of the contract, the sanctity of Christian marriage, their obligations toward each other and their children. The pastor should also urge the couple to receive the sacraments of penance and Holy Eucharist.

Today this instruction is provided in many dioceses through marriage preparation courses given to groups of engaged couples.

Required Documents. Unless the baptismal records of the parties concerned are already at the church where the marriage takes place a copy of the record of each must be provided for the pastor. Obviously this holds good only for the Catholic party if the marriage is contracted with a dispensation from disparity of worship, that is, difference of religion. A case in point would be that of a Catholic

marrying a Jew. There is no exception, however, in the case of a baptized non-Catholic (ordinary mixed marriage). If the baptismal certificate is not produced, there is always some danger of permitting an invalid union. Should the baptized non-Catholic not be able to present the documentary proof of his baptism, the priest requests a special dispensation which makes provision for the possible lack of valid baptism.

In each parish an accurate record is kept of the persons baptized within its boundaries. This record furnishes the full name of the person baptized, the date of birth, the date of baptism, the names of the parents, of the sponsors or godparents, of the minister of the sacrament of baptism and of the church and place. The law of the Church requires that each new change of status of life likewise be recorded in the register. Such entries would be, for instance, reception of the sacrament of confirmation, the contracting of marriage, pronouncement of solemn vows in religion, and promotion to the major order of subdeacon.

Catholics who have not as yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to be confirmed before they are admitted to marriage, if such arrangement can be made without grave inconvenience.

Should the marriage take place in a state that requires medical certificates before marriage, these should be given to the pastor, together with the marriage license. At times still other documents may necessarily be presented before marriage. Such matters are looked after by the pastor in each case.

The Banns of Marriage. When both parties to a pending marriage are Catholic, the law of the Church requires the announcement of the banns of marriage. This is a formal public proclamation that is made on three successive Sundays or Holydays of Obligation. The announcement must be made both in the Church of the bride and in that of the groom.

Obligation of the Faithful

If the publication of the banns is really to effect its purpose, the faithful must make known any real reason they may be aware of why the couple should not be admitted to marriage. They are, in fact, obliged in conscience to do so. No one is exempt from this, not even parents or relatives or non-Catholics, if they possess the knowledge in question. Actually this is for the good of the engaged couples. If there really is a reason why their marriage is undesirable or pro-

hibited, genuine charity toward them demands that they should be apprised of the fact through the proper authorities.

Engagement. The Church also refers in her marriage law to espousals or engagements. She distinguishes two kinds of engagements, public and private. The former, also called the solemn engagement, is a mutual promise expressed in writing and duly signed by two persons who are free to contract marriage with each other, and by the bishop or the pastor in their respective territories, or at least by two witnesses. These public engagements are little known in this country, but recently there has been at least some effort to revive them. The private engagement, as understood by the Church, is merely a verbal promise made by the parties to each other. It begets no obligation of a public character in the eyes of the Church. Under the civil law, however, it is generally recognized, and violators of the promise are amenable to the penalties of the law.

Marriage Impediments

The term "marriage impediment" is a familiar one to Catholics. It applies to barriers to marriage erected by the Church to safeguard the sacrament as well as the individual and society.

The Church, and she alone, has the right, where the baptized are concerned, to declare that certain conditions and situations that may exist in the case of a certain man and woman constitute an impediment to their marriage. There is some variation in the impeding force of the Church's impediments. Some are absolute. That is, they constitute a situation that forbids the marriage of any who are affected by them. Others are not absolute, but relative. That is to say, certain circumstances will justify a dispensation from them and render permissible the subsequent marriage of the parties affected by them.

Another distinction that is of importance regarding impediments is the fact that some are "impeding" or "prohibitive" and some are "diriment" or "invalidating." Prohibitive impediments render illicit or sinful a marriage entered into in spite of their presence, but do not render it invalid. In other words, the parties who cupably violate the law by entering marriage in spite of the prohibitive impedment are indeed married, but they commit a sin by going counter to the impediment. That is, such is the case unless due dispensation has been obtained. What are known as diriment impediments, however, invalidate a union attempted in violation of their prohibitions. Some of these may be dispensed from under certain circumstances; others may not.

Impeding Impediments

There are three impeding or prohibitive impediments. They are: certain vows, adoption, mixed marriage.

Simple Vows. Certain vows, such as the simple vow of perfect chastity and the vow of entering religious life, constitute prohibitive impediments to the entrance of marriage. A simple vow may be either a private vow, such as a lay person would take, or a vow in a religious order to which the Church does not attach the solemnities of those vows that are taken in the older orders, such as Dominicans or Carmelites. By a special privilege the simple vows of the Jesuits constitute a diriment impediment. For a sufficient reason the Church will dispense a person from the prohibitive impediment of a simple vow, allowing him to contract a marriage lawfully.

Legal Adoption. Legal adoption constitutes a prohibitive impediment in those countries in which the civil law makes the same prohibition. This is not a practical question in the United States, since none of the several states prohibits marriage by reason of adoption in the sense of an impediment of the Church.

Mixed Marriage. The impediment of mixed religion prohibits marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic. The Church vigorously opposes these unions, and the reasons for the opposition are just and serious. Frequently mixed marriage results in danger to the faith of the Catholic party, and even more frequently to the faith of any children that may be born of the union. Marriages in which the two parties differ in religion are more likely to turn out unhappily than those in which they agree in their religious belief. It is for these reasons that the Church insistently warns her members not to contract mixed marriages and not to begin associations with non-Catholics that may terminate in marriage.

Nonetheless, the Church does grant dispensations from this law, permitting the Catholic to contract a mixed marriage. But the Church grants such a permission only when there are just and serious reasons for it, the non-Catholic promises that all children of the union will be baptized and brought up as Catholics, and there is moral certainty that these promises will be fulfilled. The law adds that under no circumstances may the couple who have contracted a mixed marriage with a dispensation before a priest approach a non-Catholic clergyman for the purpose of having another ceremony.

Other Church Restrictions. Although there is no impediment, strictly so-called, prohibiting the marriage of a Catholic with a fallen-

away who has not joined another Church, or with one who is affiliated with a society condemned by the Church (e.g., the Masons), the Church urges her members not to enter such marriages, and does not allow a priest to officiate at the wedding until he has submitted the case to the judgment of the bishop.

Diriment or Invalidating Impediments

There are thirteen diriment or invalidating impediments. They are the following: age; impotence; previous marriage bond; disparity or difference of worship; clerical celibacy; solemn religious profession; abduction; crime; blood relationship, or consanguinity; affinity; public propriety (also called public decency); spiritual relationship; adoption. We shall indicate in the following the meaning of, and discuss at least briefly, those impediments that are of more common occurrence or more general application.

Age. The impediment of age means that a man cannot enter marriage validly before the completion of his sixteenth year, and a woman before the completion of her fourteenth year. This law of the Church has not always been the same. The age limit has been as low as twelve and fourteen years for girls and boys respectively in times past.

It might well be added, however, that nothing in the practice of the Church encourages marriage at the minimum level that she has established under penalty of invalidity. Rather, on the contrary, such very early marriages are discouraged by her.

Previous Marriage Bond. The law of God prohibits under pain of nullity the marriage of a person previously married, while the spouse is still living. The Church's law repeats this prohibition of the natural law. The impediment directly affects all divorced persons. Divorce as understood in the civil law does not exist for the Catholic Church. Besides the automatic invalidity of any attempt at "second marriages," many dire consequences follow such action on the part of a divorced person. He becomes a public sinner in the full sense of the law of the Church, living in a state of open defiance of the law of God and of His Church. His children, innocent victims, are branded as illegitimate and adulterine. This last, let it be mentioned, is a stigma which outraged public opinion inflicted and which the Church was forced to imitate. Such a person incurs also an excommunication reserved to the bishop for attempted second marriage after divorce.

Even if a person's previous marriage was certainly invalid (for example, contracted by a Catholic before a civil official) Church law does not permit this individual to contract another marriage until an official statement has been given by the Church that he is free to enter another union.

Disparity or Difference of Worship. This impediment refers to a marriage between an unbaptized person and a person baptized in the Catholic Church or converted to the same. If attempted, such a marriage is null and void. Nonetheless, in certain circumstances the Church does grant a dispensation to her members to contract such a marriage. The same conditions are imposed in this case as are required in the instance of a mixed marriage.

Five of the Church's impediments are based upon relation to other persons. They are: consanguinity; affinity; public propriety; spiritual relationship; adoption.

Consanguinity. Here we have perhaps one of the best known of the Church's impediments. It is based on blood or near-kin relationship. Many details could be given, but for the purpose of this treatment it will suffice to say that the present law of the Church forbids marriage between parties who stand within the third degree of relationship to each other. This would include second cousins.

Affinity. This is an impediment arising from a previous marriage such as that which exists between a widow and her deceased husband's brother. It extends to the second degree of relationship. Hence it would include the first cousins of a widow's previous husband. Here again, a dispensation is possible.

Spiritual Relationship. The relationship contracted by a baptized person and the minister (who at times may be a layman) baptizing him or her, and by a baptized person and his or her sponsor, establishes an invalidating impediment to their marriage.

Legal Relationship or Adoption. In the matter of the validity of a marriage between an adopted person and the one who adopted him, the Church follows the law of the State. In other words, marriage is permitted for the baptized if the state law recognizes such a marriage of its citizens as valid. But should the State forbid the marriage, the Church does likewise. Insofar as the United States is concerned, there is no such impediment of a diriment character.

Dispensations from Impediments

Reference was made a number of times in the foregoing to dispensations that might be granted by the Church in the case of certain

impediments. A further word regarding this practice of the Church might well be added. A dispensation must not be looked upon as an ordinary or normal thing. It is rightly called "a wound of the law." Laws are not made for the purpose of being dispensed; they are made for the purpose of being obeyed. Particularly is this true in regard to the prohibition of those impediments by which the Church declares that certain marriages are undesirable for the individual and for society. Hence, as a general practice, the possible existence of an impediment to the contemplated union should be the first question a conscientious Catholic should investigate when considering marriage. Nonetheless, serious reasons and unusual circumstances can at times render a forbidden marriage desirable under one or the other consideration. In such cases, the Church is willing to release the binding force of her law, if she has full control over it.

It should be needless to add that dispensations are not granted arbitrarily but only for proportionately grave reasons acceptable to the Church. Furthermore, it should be noted that a dispensation is always a gracious release from her law which the Church grants. The party has no right to the release and cannot demand it.

A word about a practical consideration should be added here. A certain amount of expense is necessarily incurred in maintaining the church office through which such matters as dispensations are administered. Any expense involved should in ordinary justice be borne by the parties benefited by this favor of the Church. Exception is made for the poor who are unable to make an offering. Those applying for a dispensation should inquire of their pastor, through whom the petition is made, the amount of the offering to be given. The offering is regulated in each diocese.

The Consent in Marriage

A number of different items are given attention in the Church's code of marriage law under the general heading of consent in marriage. The mutual consent of the parties is the essential factor of marriage, namely, the mutual agreement whereby each transfers to the other the right to the use of his or her body for the action of sexual intercourse. For this it is necessary that the parties have at least a general understanding of the rights and obligations of married life.

Error. If a person is mistaken as to the identity of the other party, for example, if a man went through the marriage ceremony with the twin sister of a girl he wished to marry, there is no valid marriage. But if one is in error regarding the race or financial circumstances or the personal integrity of the other, the marriage is not thereby rendered invalid, even though the deceived party argues that he would not have contracted the union if he had known the truth. The words "for better or worse, for richer or poorer" have a tragic significance in such a case.

Exclusion of Marriage or of its Essential Properties. If a person entering marriage has an intention contrary to the very substance of the marriage itself or to one of its essential properties, the marriage is null and void. This would be the case if he positively intended not to give the other party the *right* to full and proper conjugal intercourse, or intended to contract a union that could be dissolved. However, an erroneous *notion* in the *intellect* in regard to the indissolubility of marriage does not render the union invalid, as long as it does not beget an invalidating *intention* in the *will.*

Force and Fear. A person may enter marriage through a motive of fear. For example a young man who is threatened by a girl's father unless he marries her, or a girl whose mother threatens to expel her from the home unless she marries a certain wealthy man. In order to protect persons against such unjust coercion the Church has decreed that a marriage is invalid if it is entered through grave fear or violence unjustly inflicted by some other person in such wise that the victim is forced to choose marriage to deliver himself from the threatened evil.

Marriage by Proxy. The Church allows a marriage ceremony to take place for a good reason through the agency of a proxy or representative. This could happen, for example, when a marriage that was contracted invalidly is being validated and the couple are far distant from each other. One of the parties could then depute a third person to represent him or her at the ceremony. The Church lays down very exact requirements for the contracting of a marriage through a proxy.

The Time and Place of Marriage

The Church allows marriage to be celebrated on any day of the year. Many persons have the idea that the celebration of matrimony is forbidden at certain periods. But actually what is forbidden is the *solemnization* of marriage at these times, that is, the Nuptial Mass and nuptial blessing. These "closed seasons," as they are called, are the days from the first Sunday in Advent to Christmas inclusive, and from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday inclusive. A private wedding without the Nuptial Mass is not forbidden at these times; and for good reasons the bishop can allow even the Nuptial Mass and the

solemn blessing in the "closed season," but there should not be much display at the wedding.

The Witnesses. When one (at least) of the parties is or was a Catholic, the marriage is valid only on condition that it takes place in the presence of an authorized priest and at least two witnesses.

It is the general ruling of the Church that the marriage shall be celebrated in the parish of the bride, if the two come from different parishes, unless there is good reason for having the ceremony in the parish of the groom.

II. The Civil Law of Marriage

In the beginning of this treatment of the legal safeguards of marriage, reference was made to spiritual and temporal matters pertaining to marriage, and the fact was noted that the former come under the authority of the Church and the latter under the power of the State.

Inasmuch as marriage in the Church has been raised to the dignity of a sacrament, the State has no valid power to tell the Church who may receive this sacrament, nor to fix conditions for its administration. Thus a marriage performed according to the rites of the Church, and valid under the law, remains valid, despite any declaration of the State to the contrary. Likewise, the State does not act justly in seeking to prohibit marriage to persons who may receive it under the laws of the Church. These may be situations, as we shall see, in which conflict between the Church and State may ensue as a result of this stand of the Church.

The Situation in the United States

Insofar as the United States is concerned, while most marriage legislation is probably on subjects proper for public supervision, one finds some statutes dealing with aspects of the relation more properly within the province of the Church. In general, it can be said that the civil law here considers itself to be the protector of marriage as something necessary for the continued existence of society, and that marriage is a sacred status and not a mere civil contract. Therefore, while American Catholics may indeed regret that the State to some extent has entered a field where the Church should be supreme, they may find solace in the fact that in this country civil legislation on marriage coincides substantially with the law of the Church, or at least does not conflict with it. True, in some States a few points of

conflict have developed, but in actual practice Catholics seldom, if ever, have difficulty in this field as between obeying Church or State.

We here present some of the laws as they exist, but will not go into the matter of the relative rights of Church and State to legislate on any feature of marriage, except where incidental mention of possible conflict may appear advisable. Attention will be given particularly to governmental restrictions on marriage under civil law. A discussion of the laws pertaining to the civil rights of married persons and those relating to inheritance and property considerations, while they might bring out many interesting and practical points, are hardly in place here.

Under our constitutional system, marriage is within the jurisdiction of the individual states. The United States Congress legislates on marriage only for Federal areas, such as the District of Columbia. While each state has its own laws on the subject, there is substantial similarity in the over-all picture. However, there are differences in detail, so that it cannot be taken for granted that the law on any one phase of marriage will be identical everywhere.

Government Restrictions on Marriage

The major legal items that seem to call for consideration here are those dealing with the following matters: age requirements; consanguinity; miscegenation; prohibition of marriages of diseased persons; the scope of prohibitory legislation.

Age Requirements. There are still some states in this country, notably in the South, that hold to the old regulation of the Roman law requiring that girls be twelve years old and boys fourteen for valid marriage. In most of them, however, the age limits have been raised, sixteen and eighteen now being the usual pattern.

There is another provision in respect to age found in all states, and that is one which requires the consent of parents or guardians for persons within an age bracket somewhat higher. Usually this is eighteen for girls and twenty-one for boys. A marriage in violation of this provision is not necessarily invalid, but is construed to be "unlawful." That is, the official who issues a marriage license or the minister who performs the ceremony, knowing that parental consent is legally required, but not obtained, is guilty of a criminal offense, the punishment for which is fine or imprisonment. Misrepresentation as to age, so as to avoid the requirements of the statute, is likewise an offense, whether by the spouses themselves or by others on their behalf.

Consanguinity. The consanguinity rules of the states are in general more liberal than those of the Church, there being the usual differences

from state to state. It might be said that in all states marriage is prohibited within the immediate family, in the uncle-niece and aunt-nephew relation, and in all except a few between first cousins. In a few states the prohibition extends to children of first cousins, and in a very few to second cousins.

Miscegenation. There is a type of prohibition on marriage that the Church does not have. This is the prohibition in a number of states against marriage between persons of the white and Negro races. In a few states the prohibition is extended to Indians and Asians. These "miscegenation statutes" are traditional in the South, but may be found in states situated elsewhere as well. However, they are not universal, and in many jurisdictions there is no restriction on interracial marriage. Where miscegenation statutes are in effect, they are the law of the land, and anyone violating them does so at the risk of prosecution. In the eyes of the Church an interracial marriage is a valid marriage.

Prohibition on Marriage of Diseased Persons. Most states prohibit the marriage of insane and feeble-minded persons. This is consistent generally with practice in the Church, which will not approve the marriage of persons who do not have sufficient mental capacity at the time of the contract to express intelligent consent to a change in their state of life or who cannot properly fulfill the purposes of marriage.

Another type of marriage legislation, on the ground of health, is found in a number of states. This is a requirement that all candidates for marriage must undergo a physical examination in respect to venereal disease. If found to be infected with any of the several designated diseases, marriage is prohibited until it can be established that the malady has been cured, or at least arrested to the point of being non-contageous.

Civil Rights of Married Persons

As already noted, we shall not go into any details regarding the laws covering civil rights of married persons. In general it can be said that in the United States there has been a course of legislation placing married women on terms of legal equality with their husbands.

Regarding matters of inheritance and property it might be noted that they differ in the various states. They are also usually involved and technical. Hence the married couple should seek competent legal advice when faced with momentous decisions in respect to their

property affairs. Above all, they should never buy real estate without consulting a lawyer. The fee charged may be completely insignificant in proportion to the risk taken of getting a defective title, or learning too late that the highly technical fine print in their mortgage or deed of trust means something entirely different from what they thought it did.

TEAR OFF ALONG PERFORATED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *What is the purpose of Marriage Laws?*
2. *Why does the Church have her own marriage laws?*
3. *Explain what is meant by the prenuptial investigations of the Church. What is their purpose?*
4. *What documents are required of those who are to marry?*
5. *What facts are indicated in the baptismal record book of the Church?*
6. *What is meant by the banns of marriage? What obligation have people with regard to them?*
7. *Distinguish public and private engagements.*
8. *What is meant by a marriage impediment?*
9. *Who has the right to establish impediments for the baptized?*
10. *Distinguish impeding or prohibitive impediments and diriment or invalidating impediments.*
11. *Explain what is meant by the impediment of simple vows.*
12. *Is the impediment of legal adoption a practical matter in the United States?*
13. *Explain the impediment of mixed marriage.*
14. *Why does the Church oppose mixed marriage?*
15. *In the case of a dispensation for such a marriage what promises does the Church demand of the Catholic party?*
16. *May a Catholic marry a mason or member of another condemned society? May he marry a fallen-away Catholic who has not joined another Church?*

17. *What is the present law of the Church regarding minimum marriageable age?*

18. *What is meant by the impediment of a previous marriage bond? What penalties do Catholics incur by going counter to it?*

19. *What is the difference between the impediment of mixed marriage and that of disparity or difference of worship?*

20. *What is the impediment of affinity? of spiritual relationship? Within what degree of blood relationship is marriage permitted under the law of the Church?*

21. *What is meant by a dispensation from an impediment? Are dispensations given indiscriminately?*

22. *Is a marriage valid that has been entered upon through grave fear?*

23. *Is a forced marriage valid?*

24. *What is meant by error as an impediment to marriage?*

25. *Are witnesses required for the validity of a marriage?*

26. *When may a marriage be celebrated? Where should it be celebrated?*

27. *What matters regarding marriage come under the authority of the State?*

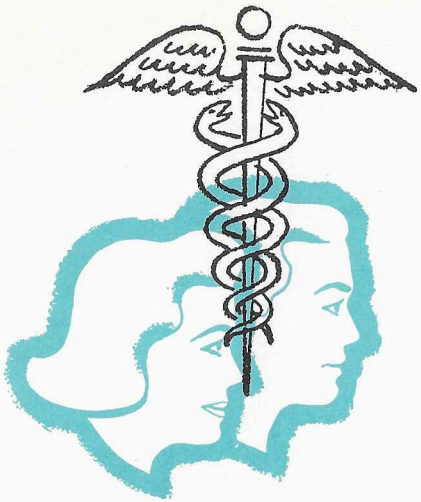
28. *Is there conflict between Church and State in this country over marriage regulations?*

29. *What are the age requirements for marriage under civil law in the United States?*

30. *What is the law in this country regarding the marriage of relatives?*

31. *Do our state laws forbid the marriage of Negroes and whites?*

32. *What is the law in this country regarding the marriage of diseased persons?*



The Medical Aspects of Marriage

LESSON IV

IV

THE MEDICAL ASPECTS OF MARRIAGE

THE EXPERIENCES of married life are singularly repetitious. The problems on which men and women stub their toes are fairly common to all. The men and women who make a success of marriage have actually followed a relatively few simple rules. A doctor hears the problems over and over again. He watches with satisfaction while a young couple learn the rules, put them into effect and come up with a successful, happy marriage. Like a referee the doctor gets to know the rules and the penalties. Through the years, he realizes that marriage is made a success, not by a string of negatives, but by a set of positive instructions on the important things, such as companionship, similarity of taste, agreement on the use of money, the fundamental differences between men and women in love. He knows the effect children have on the character of their parents and why jealousy is a terrible thing and silence a highly explosive bomb.

The doctor also will have some knowledge of the fact that the obvious differences between a man and a woman, the differences that can be appreciated with an eye and an ear, are the less significant differences. A man uses the same words that a woman uses, but he speaks almost a different language. His thought processes are not quite the same as hers, because where she hastens to her decisions and conclusions almost intuitively, he plods to his with laborious logic. His emotional reactions to life and love are not the same as hers.

A wife is attracted to her husband physically. He satisfies her physically, justifying the instinctive desire she has for his embrace, but the forces that drive her into his arms are not all physical. There is a strong psychological and intellectual attraction. A woman feels with some justification that a man's love will give her a maturity she could never hope to find in even the most intimate association with her woman friends. Married life demands a union so close that no change of mood, nor slightest shift of emotion can hope to pass unnoticed. The intimate embrace of physical love is such that it can crack open the defenses with which human minds protect their inner-

most secrets. Sadness and joy shared, bring a man and a woman closer spiritually.

If their marriage is what a marriage should be, husband and wife after a while begin to see life in a way that is neither completely masculine nor yet exclusively feminine. They see it in a way that, because it is free from the one-sided prejudices of either sex, is more truly human.

Consulting the Doctor

And so when the young engaged couple wish to consult a doctor, they would do well to choose one whose philosophy of life and living has similar background to their own. If his marriage has been happy and truly Christian, then he will have the emotional maturity which they hope to achieve. This cannot be learned by reading alone. For emotional maturity, the key to marital happiness, has nothing to do with age or with a college education. One cannot think his way into it because it is not an intellectual process. One must feel his way. One must grow into it. Books may tell us that two people have to be mature in order to have a successful and happy marriage. But the truth is that very seldom do two who are completely mature, that is, emotionally mature young people, happen to get together and marry. Fortunately, marriage itself hastens the maturing process. Unless there is a deep-rooted maladjustment somewhere in the relationship, people grow in marriage, and as the marriage grows, both parties grow with it. In some people this takes longer than in others.

It should be obvious, therefore, that there is every right for the young engaged couple to obtain all the information necessary for the intelligent performance of the duties and privileges of married life; for the necessary understanding of these matters does not come automatically or by mere instinct. The common find-out-for-yourself method makes many a sad mistake.

The most suitable time for the young couple to consult their doctor is shortly before the wedding. Then both will have time enough to make their plans and foresee how they are to conduct themselves. Let them understand that to secure this needed information is in no way contrary to decency or modesty. The young engaged couple should feel as free to ask any intelligent question of their chosen physician as they would feel free to ask their confessor. It is the duty of the physician to keep himself informed with recent advances in marital physiology and in the physiology of reproduction, so that he can have available the scientific background for the answers which these young people of today request.

Christian Versus Materialist Views

Fundamentally, the difference between the Christian and the materialistic point of view of marriage as the doctor sees it is simply this: to the modern materialist marriage is only a part of sexual experience. There is premarital sex, intra-marital sex and extra-marital sex. There are widely read books which catalogue the "Gallup Poll" of such experience of the American scene. Needless to say, that is not the Catholic doctor's view.

Sex is indeed a highly important phase of marriage. Without the physical act of marital union the marriage is not consummated. But while sex itself is, and must remain, for Christians an important phase of marriage, it is by no means for them the whole of marriage. Many parts of this course should amply show that.

Conjugal Love an Important Factor. Successful sexual satisfaction in marriage depends primarily upon love. Love is not a statistic. In this regard, most modernistic writings on sex in marriage fail badly even as scientific treatises. To omit love and the inner aspiration to become a parent is to omit that which makes man and woman really human. Leave love out of consideration and there is no sexual behavior, but only a manifestation of the physiological reaction of the sexual organs. "Love is like a seed that is planted, which grows with constant and daily care, renews itself amidst storms and winds, rejoices in its blossoms, thrills to its fruits, dies to itself in the winter of its discontent and arises again to the freshness of a higher life. Love must undergo a continuous transformation under penalty of sinking otherwise into dullness and monotony. Love must have crises, or it dies. It thrives on what seems for a moment like its death. These crises happen in the birth of the child and particularly of a first child, when the husband is made a father and the wife a mother. They also happen in sickness, sorrow, quarrels and mutual pardons." [1]

Because a doctor's life experience teaches him that human love is something far greater than the mere summation of satisfactory physical experience, he offers those contemplating marriage a sympathetic and yet comprehensively objective point of view. Yet there are those who do not voluntarily consult with him. The usual reason why couples contemplating marriage visit the doctor has been the state law which requires examination and blood test for syphilis as a premarital requirement. They come only because the law forces them to come and not because they understand the need for premarital health evaluation.

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[1] Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

If the blood test reveals no evidence of venereal disease, the doctor completes the medical certificates and the young people are able to marry. Actually all that the premarital examination prescribed by law reveals is the presence or absence of venereal disease. More often than not, the premarital visit is left for the very last minute, usually about forty-eight or seventy-two hours before obtaining the license. It is done in haste and excitement at this late moment. Young people are not psychologically prepared to consider the many other important problems concerning their health at this late date.

Here are two young people about to make the most serious decision of their life: to make a contract to belong to each other in sickness and in health until death. Yet not until almost the last moment do they usually present themselves to the physician to determine whether or not they are presenting their prospective partner an honest bill of health. In simple fairness, both parties should, well in advance of the wedding, have a complete physical and laboratory check-up. Whether this check-up is done by the same physician or by their mutual family physician makes little difference, provided the results of the examination are honestly made known to their prospective partner. In most cases the engaged couple will be happy to learn that they are both in good physical condition. Should some unsatisfactory condition be disclosed, it may well be possible to remedy the disorder before it has made much headway. There is an understandable fear that many of these young people have, namely, that what is determined may postpone the wedding. But the postponement of a wedding is far less serious than the tragedy of a lifetime of prolonged illness or invalidism. It should be remembered that the doctor is bound by professional secrecy. The permission to disclose his findings, even to the prospective mate, rests upon their mutual consent. He is only trying to prevent them from acquiring serious disease or to find it in the early curable stages.

The Health Examination

No two doctors will conduct a health examination exactly in the same sequence. The following outline should give an idea what to expect of a complete pre-marital health examination.

1. Family History

It has been said that we are an omnibus in which all of our ancestors ride. In heredity, the first factor is an investigation into ancestry. The doctor will first inquire then into the health and illness of a

patient's grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters and occasionally uncles and aunts. If any have died, he will be particularly eager to know what the disorder was from which they died. He may inquire, then, into certain aspects of hereditary diseases.

Hereditary Nervous Diseases. There are a number of true hereditary nervous diseases, but fortunately they are rare. Predisposition to nervousness, however, to some extent runs in families. Although most of the commonly known diseases of the nervous system erroneously termed insanity are not inherited as such, it is possible that the instability that makes either for genius or dementia is inclined to run in a family. A number of minor hereditary nervous forms to which people are disposed are exemplified in ticks and twitches, speech defects and color blindness. Diabetes and certain other glandular disorders, particularly hyper — or hypothyroidism can be inherited.

Definitely hereditary are epilepsy, hemophilia (tendency to bleed at minor injuries), albinism, dwarfism, gigantism, imbecility and mutism (deaf - dumbness). In the latter instance, because normal children have been born to parents who are both mutes, it is wise to consult a geneticist before marriage, who will be able to offer sound advice on this score. The most important point to remember, however, is this: *Only a small percentage of children born to parents whose families show evidence of some transmissable hereditary diseases actually inherit such abnormalities. As a matter of fact, the chances of their having normal offspring greatly outnumber their chances of having abnormal children.* This is in accordance with the Mendelian theory.

Tuberculosis Nonhereditary. The most serious form of illness besetting a family is tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is not a hereditary disease. There seems to be some evidence, however, that there is a slight tendency towards it. Certainly the presence of active tuberculosis in a family that has been living together for some time prior to the diagnosis of tuberculosis in even the initial case warrants a careful study of all members of the family. In large cities free chest X-ray examinations are now almost a routine. Hence, where there is a family history of tuberculosis, not only must there be a complete physical examination of the lungs, but an X-ray study seems imperative.

2. Past History

The doctor will want to review the patient's life from the time of his childhood. He will want to know if there was any delay in his

or her learning to walk, talk or read, in an effort to trace any weakness. He will be particularly interested in the childhood diseases; for he is aware that mumps may involve the ovaries in the girl and the testicles in the boy, impairing their subsequent fertility. A serious appendicitis, particularly if there was a rupture of the appendix, may leave adhesions that will prevent conception in the female. He will hope to hear that the girl has already had German measles in her youth, for German measles, if contracted during the first three months of pregnancy, may harm the child. Hence, it is extremely important that all girl children be exposed to German measles when they are young.

Naturally any evidence of tuberculosis in childhood, whether it involves the glands of the neck or the lungs, is a very important point to be ascertained.

The doctor will inquire into childhood compulsions, such as bed-wetting, nail biting, thumb sucking and stammering, as indications of nervousness. He will be interested in the military service record of either party, for during the wartime service in the tropics many men acquired malaria or yellow fever and other tropical diseases which interfered with sperm production.

Venereal Diseases. The doctor may tactfully inquire as to whether or not either has ever acquired a venereal disease, whether this be gonorrhea or syphilis. Since the state requires that they take a blood test to determine the presence or absence of the former, it makes sense that the doctor should at least know whether there has been any exposure and/or known infection. It is to the patient's advantage to be frank and honest in this regard, so that the doctor may be able to be exacting in his physical examination to determine that both diseases have been completely eradicated. When one realizes that what the doctor is trying to do is to be able to reassure both parties to the proposed marriage that no child will be born deaf, blind, dumb or with mental deficiency because of these diseases, they will appreciate that it would be a great unkindness if he did not do his duty in making every effort to rule out both of them. Very fortunately, even when either of these diseases is diagnosed in an expectant mother, prompt treatment with penicillin can usually completely eradicate it then. The child is born free of the disease. It is obvious that if even prior to marriage these diseases can be ruled out, the safety of the expected children is doubly safeguarded.

Checking on the Heart and Tuberculosis

The doctor may be particularly interested in whether either party ever had rheumatic fever or scarlet fever, since these predispose to a heart condition. Any upper respiratory infection that was prolonged, such as bronchitis, pleurisy, bronchiectasis, or a past history of unexplained fever, sweating at night or coughing up of blood will lead into a very careful physical examination to determine whether tuberculosis is absent.

Even if active tuberculosis or active syphilis or gonorrhea is present, it does not mean that the marriage cannot ultimately take place.

3. Present History

The doctor will want to know about personal hygiene; for instance, the number of hours of sleep, amount of relaxation, type of occupation and habits in regard to smoking and drinking.

Opportunity to Allay Anxieties

Since the examination of each party, even by the same physician, is always on a separate occasion, each party should feel free at this time to inquire of the doctor about any anxieties he or she may have concerning their approaching marital state. It has been the writer's policy never to invade the privacy of a patient in this regard, but if they have any problem concerning anatomy or the physiology of the marriage act, an opportunity to discuss these is afforded by an offer to answer any questions. It is my custom to remind them that they are about to be given an opportunity to assist in the creation of a new human being. Since one out of six married couples have no children unless they take special fertility studies, I usually remind them that they should first make certain that they can have children before they worry as to how few they can have.

The Question of Rhythm or Periodic Continence

The decision as to whether they should practice rhythm early in their marriage is entirely a non-medical decision. This is up to their individual consciences as guided by their confessor. However, they have a right to question the physician at this time concerning the scientific basis of the rhythm theory as well as how to apply it in their own cases. Needless to say, this is not said in order to encourage the use of this practice. It is said becaue there are instances in which it is justified, and even some in which it may be a necessity. For example, if the bride-to-be has had tuberculosis infection or high blood

pressure or heart disease, it becomes almost imperative that a careful instruction in the rhythm theory be given in response to her request. Since the proper application of rhythm offers a most effective method of postponing pregnancies when indicated, it is a positive duty of the Catholic physician to keep abreast with developments in the field of reproductive physiology lest, because of casual and incomplete instruction, the patients lose faith in the scientific authenticity of the method.

The proper use of rhythm (periodic continence) requires intelligence and cooperation. To avoid lapses of memory, it requires written data concerning the dates and interval between the menstrual periods. For most accurate appraisal, when medically indicated, the recording of the waking morning temperature offers a simple means of determining the days of the least likelihood of pregnancy. Further reference will be made to this later.

If there was a bad obstetrical history in the girl's family and if she has an abnormal fear of pregnancy, it is essential to point out that if she goes to the physician early and follows his instructions carefully, she has little to fear today. For blood banks and antibiotics and careful prenatal care have all but eliminated the hazard of maternal mortality.

The So-called Mother-Child Dilemma

Particularly if the bride-to-be is not of the Catholic faith, any misunderstanding of Catholic teaching on marriage, birth control and abortion should be carefully and completely discussed. Specifically, too, must the all too prevalent misunderstanding that "if a choice be made the life of the unborn child should be preferred to that of the mother" be categorically denied. It is strange how far such misinterpretations regarding the Church's teachings can go. Only recently Pope Pius XII felt constrained to speak out in unmistakably clear words against the misconception in question. Addressing the Congress of Catholic Physicians in Rome in November, 1951, he stated: "Never and in no case has the Church taught that the life of the child must be preferred to that of the mother. Neither the life of the mother nor the child can be subjected to an act of direct suppression. It is erroneous to put the question with this alternative, either the life of the child or that of the mother. In the one case as in the other, there can be but one obligation, to make every effort to save the lives of both; of the mother and of the child."

4. Physical Examination

A complete physical examination will not vary from that which either of the prospective parties have received on other occasions, excepting that at this time the genital system will require careful attention. A respectful explanation of our basic reproductive anatomy and physiology at this time should be entirely in place. What God has seen fit to create, we should not be ashamed to name scientifically. The conscientious Catholic physician will take every reasonable care not to offend against the sense of modesty or the sensibilities of his patients in any way.

5. Laboratory Examinations

In addition to the careful physical examination there are certain laboratory examinations which are essential for the complete reassurance that the patient is in good health. The first and simplest is the urine analysis which reveals such conditions as diabetes, nephritis (kidney trouble) and pyelitis. The second test is, of course, the Wassermann (or Kahn or Hinton) test that establishes the presence or absence of syphilis. The third test is the X-ray of the chest. This may reveal early tuberculosis even in the absence of all physical symptoms. The fourth test is the complete blood examination which will reveal anemias, leukemias and other blood disorders such as the Rh factor.

The Rh Factor

Many young couples are requesting the Rh factor determination prior to marriage. This is worthwhile. However, Rh incompatibility need not prevent a marriage, for only 15% of the population is Rh negative. Even if the husband-to-be is Rh positive and presumably homozygous (that is, with both parents positive), and the wife Rh negative, this does not mean that necessarily all of the children born of such a marriage will be sensitized to the Rh factor. Actually, mothers who are Rh negative, married to such homozygous Rh positive fathers are only sensitized in 5% of the cases. Twenty-one out of twenty-two of these mothers do not become sensitized. Even those who do become sensitized do not always become sensitized sufficiently to produce illness in the infant, that is, Erythroblastosis—dissolution of the blood. Moreover, over 90% of such infants with Erythroblastosis can be saved by prompt replacement transfusion after they are born. It is unfortunate that so much propaganda value of

this rare situation has been made by the advocates of therapeutic abortion, sterilization and birth control.

Marital Hygiene

Marital hygiene or sex hygiene may be called the assembled mass of knowledge and practices that have as their purpose the preservation and complete health of the genital organs.

In God's design man and woman are to be associated in the great mystery of the transmission of life. In keeping with this plan, the Almighty furnished each of them with special organs suitable to the function of reproduction. Upon each man and woman, therefore, falls a consequent responsibility to give proper hygienic care to these remarkable organs. To shirk this responsibility by failing to observe the first rule of sex hygiene, which is *scrupulous cleanliness,* is a very serious matter. These organs richly endowed with secretory glands require a special cleanliness which is often neglected, due to false modesty.

Means of Maintaining Cleanliness

The best method of maintaining scrupulous cleanliness is by the daily shower bath with liberal use of soap on the genital organs. Despite all the advertising of medical preparations for douching under the misleading names of marital hygiene it is rarely necessary for the average wife to take douches excepting the period immediately following menstruation unless there is an irritating mal-odorous or itching-type discharge; in which case the physician should be consulted. The vagina normally contains organisms which preserve its acidity. Either in the sitting or standing position, its secretions normally drain to the exterior satisfactorily. Frequently taking douches, particularly with alkaline-type preparations, kills the normally protective bacterial floor.

It is the duty of the mother of the family to instruct girls from earliest childhood in the proper use of cleansing tissue particularly in the avoidance of carrying organisms forward from the rectum toward the vagina. It is a simple matter to instruct little girls that any cleansing in this area should be from before backwards or from side to side. The use of the most delicate tissues in this area will prove, in the long run, to be a good financial investment in health. Failure to observe the simple ordinary rules of personal bodily cleanliness with resultant

diminuation of the emotional ardour of the married partners is too great a price to pay for false modesty.

Further important considerations that deserve attention in any thorough-going discussion of the medical aspects of marriage are those relating to conception and pregnancy and related problems. We shall give attention to these in the next lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. *Is it advisable to consult a doctor before marriage?*
2. *If a doctor is consulted, would it be advisable for a Catholic to choose a Catholic physician?*
3. *What are some of the items in a party's family history that the doctor inquires about in a health examination.*
4. *What is to be said about the heredity of nervous diseases?*
5. *Is Tuberculosis hereditary?*
6. *What are some of the items the doctor will inquire about regarding the past history of a patient in making a health examination?*
7. *What are items the doctor will inquire about in regard to the present history or personal hygiene of the patient?*
8. *Should a Catholic party hesitate to discuss frankly with a Catholic doctor any anxieties they may have regarding their approaching marital state?*
9. *Specifically, might the matter of periodic continence be discussed with him?*
10. *What is the teaching of the Church regarding what is at times referred to as the mother-child dilemma?*
11. *What are the chief laboratory examinations that the doctor makes in the case of a premarital health examination?*
12. *What are the main facts regarding the so-called Rh factor?*
13. *What is the first rule of sex hygiene?*

Adjustment In Marriage

"Unless the Lord build . . .
they labor in vain . . ."

LESSON V

V

ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

THE TERM "marriage adjustment" should call for little definition or explanation. It implies a satisfactory adaptation to each other on the part of the husband and wife in marriage. It implies a spirit of amity, cooperation, teamwork between them. It implies cordial and harmonious relationships. Viewed negatively, it implies the absence of tensions and antagonisms, of clash and conflict, between the marital partners.

Adjustment in marriage is not something that is brought about automatically. That is true in spite of the fact that the sexes complement each other, and should therefore in a measure complete and perfect each other. A basic reason for this is that the sexes also differ in various ways. Differences on their part often forestall a satisfactory adjustment, and they may even lead to open clash and conflict. Then, too, still other factors besides differences may lead to lack of satisfactory adjustment or to maladjustment in marriage.

1. Differences Between Men and Women

The most profound differences that distinguish human beings are differences in sex, differences in other words, between man and woman. The two are different in the realm of both the physical and what for the want of a better word might be called the psychical. In the case of the latter one might distinguish, for example, intellectual differences, differences in imagination, differences in flexibility, in sensitiveness and in love.

Intellectual Differences. Fundamentally, men and women are alike in regard to intellect. Here, as in all else, both share in the essentials of human nature. Both possess rationality; both have intelligence. Both, one might add immediately, have free will; both share in the heritage of Christianity; both can become "children of God."

However, there are also intellectual differences between the sexes. There is, so to speak, a distribution of human nature, a distribution that is observable both between the two sexes and between mem-

bers of one and the same sex. As a matter of fact, each individual is unique. But while there are differences between members of the same sex, the differences between the two sexes are unquestionably more profound.

Both men and women, for instance, have logical minds, and yet they are logical in a different way. There in a difference of understanding between the two, a difference in grasping the truth. Men reason more than do women. Men are inclined to plan methodically, to calculate, to deduce. Women get at truth more through intuition. Their knowledge is more spontaneous than is that of men. The woman's understanding is influenced more by the heart and feelings than is the man's.

Differences in Imagination. So, too, do the sexes differ somewhat insofar as imagination is concerned. Woman is more imaginative than man. The latter, with his thinking and planning, his careful examination and deduction, his analysis of details, tends to leave little room for imagination. What imagination he does usually have deals for the most part with ideas rather than things. Woman, on the other hand, less calculating, less the philosopher, uses her imagination extensively. Her imagination is one of details. It is of things rather than of ideas.

The contributions of both—the reasoning contribution of the man and the imaginative one of the woman—can be helpful to the life in common of the husband and the wife. They very properly complement each other. Should they, instead of being looked upon as complementary, be taken to constitute irreconcilable differences, the results would show themselves in unfortunate misunderstandings and conflicts.

Woman's Greater Flexibility. Woman is normally more flexible, more adaptable than man. Both this greater measure of flexibility and also of imaginativeness on her part can be a great boon to the pair and their family. Time and again, in their relationships with each other, must a husband and wife reach a compromise with regard to their views and attitudes. They must, so to speak, meet each other half way if they are to get along happily together. But, actually, it is considerably easier for the woman, because of her greater flexibility, to adapt herself to her husband's ways and views than it is for him to adapt himself to hers. Undoubtedly many a serious breach in their relationship is avoided by a sensible and humble recognition of this fact on the part of woman, and by conduct on her part that is in harmony with it.

There has, as a matter of fact, been some change in regard to this characteristic over more recent years. In earlier times, the flexibility of woman was taken for granted and was kept alive by the training she got before she married. It was, one might say, a part of the culture of the time. Her position was in great part one of dependence. But nowadays it frequently happens that a girl, before she marries, has won for herself some sort of independent existence. Often she provides wholly or partially for the maintenance of her family. Its members are dependent on her, rather than she on them. At times she achieves notable success as a career woman. She may have achieved greater success and earned a higher income than the man she eventually marries.

The result of these and similar developments of more recent times is that the girl's character has often acquired a certain rigidity, or, at any rate, has become so consolidated that her former flexibility is lacking, and adjustment cannot be attained without much good will and patient effort on her part. It is of the utmost importance to herself and her spouse that such effort be seriously and consistently put forth by her.

Differences in Sensitivity. Still another difference between man and woman of considerable importance is found in their feelings. This difference is probably the result of cultural status rather than of nature. Be that as it may, man's feelings often seem less sensitive than woman's. Little attentions in daily life, for instance, will mean much to a woman. Failure on the part of the husband to bestow them on his wife may readily be interpreted by her as a lack of interest on his part and will cause her not a little pain. The absence of such attentions on her part, on the other hand, will not so readily be noticed by the husband. While she will be inclined to exaggerate any want of consideration on his part, he will probably not even be aware that there was any such lack on his part. Obviously, unless this difference between the two sexes is understood it may frequently lead to hurt feelings and to misunderstandings that bode no good for their relationship. It will stand in the way of really satisfactory adjustment.

The Emotion of Love. A particularly important question for marriage is whether there are differences between the sexes with regard to the emotion of love. The answer to the question is that differences do exist and that it is a matter of much importance that those contemplating marriage are aware of the fact. If they are not, lasting harm may result after marriage because of the want of a satisfactory adjustment in the marital relationship.

There are differences between the sexes in regard to the physical element of love and in regard to what might broadly be called the psychic or spiritual elements. Ordinarily the physical bulks larger in the case of the man, the psychical in the case of the woman. A lack of knowledge of these differences may be the cause of the man, quite inadvertently perhaps, wounding the feelings of his wife in marriage, leading her to believe that he is quite without real love for her and considers her merely an instrument for the satisfaction of his sexual passion.

Monsignor Cooper has written with clarity on this subject:[1]

> The marital relation ordinarily contributes to and enriches the physical elements of love itself. It may, however, under certain circumstances cut into and undermine higher love. Newly-married couples particularly need to bear in mind the great differences that commonly exist between the sexes in the matter of the physical and psychical elements. Their sex natures differ often very fundamentally.
>
> The larger part which the physical element plays in the man's nature may—unless he is on his guard to show the most tender and considerate thoughtfulness for his mate, and unless he makes clear in every possible way that over and above the physical urge there is real love and self-devotion—repel her and make her think he is merely looking upon her as a means of satisfying passion. He needs to recall that what nature urges upon him may possibly be to her indifferent, or repulsive, or even physically painful. On the other hand, the larger the part that the psychical elements play in the woman's nature may lead him to think her cold, unresponsive or lacking in affection.
>
> The wife, too, on her part, especially the newly-wed one, may need to recall that the man's very commonly more urgent sex impulses are no indication that he has married her just to satisfy them, or that the deepest and finest love is not also present.
>
> A better understanding of the common psychic differences between man and woman as God has made them would avert many marital tragedies that begin within twenty-four hours after the wedding. A little more consideration on his part, a little more realization on hers that he does not love her less because God has given him stronger physical sex impulses, would help greatly in many cases to avert domestic disharmony and to promote domestic peace and happiness.

[1] John M. Cooper, *Religion Outlines for Colleges, Course IV* (rev. ed.), Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1941, pp. 179-80.

2. Other Causes of Marital Maladjustment

There are many other causes of lack of adjustment or of maladjustment in marriage besides differences founded in the nature of the sexes. Perhaps outstanding among these are the following: cultural factors; religious differences; the health factor; the in-law factor; the economic factors; personal factors. All of these can cause tension situations and even lead to open clash and outright conflict between spouses.

Cultural Factors. The term "culture" is a very broad one. It extends to such matters as the racial, recreational, educational, and religious customs and folkways of a people. These various factors or elements affect a person's life pattern. They affect his personality, his outlook on life. They determine the attitude or bias with which he approaches any problem or life situation. It should be obvious that where, on the one hand, the culture or life patterns of husband and wife are similar, there is a good basis for harmonious adjustment, and that where, on the other hand, there is fundamental dissimilarity in their culture, there is some danger that discord and division will result, that maladjustment or lack of satisfactory adjustment will be a logical consequence.

At least some differences in culture exist between native and foreign born, members of different ethnic or racial groups, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, and members of different religions. These differences show themselves in a variety of ways—in the customs, habits, attitudes, ideals, and tastes of a people. In the close association of husband and wife they may easily interfere with the development of a harmonious adjustment between them. They may hinder rather than help the ready development of a community of interests and of the sympathetic association that truly successful married life demands. Potential seeds of maladjustment will exist where they are present.

One can only conclude, on the basis of the foregoing considerations, that reasonable effort should be made to eliminate such differences. In choosing a life partner, for instance, an individual should look for a measure of similarity in the party, and not select someone who is strikingly dissimilar. It is with good sense that like marries like. Ordinarily, the compatibility that smooths the way for satisfactory adjustment between spouses is based on similarities that exist between them. Differences and dissimilarities readily lead to incompatibilities and tensions. This is not true only with regard to cultural, but also with regard to other differences and dissimilarities. It does not imply,

of course, that successful marriage is impossible where they exist. But it does imply that, all in all, success in marriage will be more difficult to attain.

The Mixed Marriage Factor. The religious factor, though it might rightly be listed with cultural factors, may well be given special mention, particularly so because of the many mixed marriages that exist in this country of many conflicting religions. It is difficult to imagine a mixed marriage that is characterized by a genuinely harmonious adjustment. This is particularly true where the two parties to the marriage contract really take their religion seriously. Already fifteen centuries ago, St. Ambrose raised the question: "Where there is discord in faith, how can there be accord in charity?" Actually, of all differences, there are none more serious, none more stubborn or disastrous in their results, than differences of a religious character. Religion shapes one's philosophy of life. It deals with one's most fundamental attitudes. And where there are differences in fundamentals, the demon of discord is only too likely to raise his head. Even granted agreement in other departments of life it would be hardly less than surprising if a cordial adaptation of spouses to each other were found when there are differences between them in that most important realm of life, the realm of religion.

It is well to note also that not only may religious beliefs but also religious practices and customs cause friction between spouses and prevent cordial relationships. Such practices might be, for instance, abstinence from meat on forbidden days, the practice of confession, and the question of sending children to a parish school. Then, too, may differences in moral viewpoints lead to open conflict, or, at any rate, to a lack of harmony and mutuality that precludes satisfactory adjustment. The fact remains that people who have different religious beliefs and practices, walk different paths. One of the main bases for a community of ideals and a unity of sentiments is missing in their lives.

In cases in which spouses take religion lightly or in which its influence is entirely lacking in their lives, there may be no open disagreement because of religious differences. Another kind of threat to adjustment between them, however, will exist. In such a situation there will be lacking to their union the strengthening power of a genuine religious spirit and the sense of responsibility that goes with it. Under the circumstances there may well be a question whether the two will be able successfully to weather the storms that are almost certain to arise from time to time.

The Health Factor. There is no small connection between the health factor and a mutually agreeable adjustment between husband and wife. An individual in poor health finds it more than ordinarily difficult to keep an even temper and to get along agreeably with those around him. Poor health on the part of the husband, for instance, may rob the family of its main, and even only, support, thereby causing worry and a feeling of insecurity. Similarly, illness on the part of the wife may imply inability to fulfill any of a number of the normal functions and responsibilities of family life. Tensions and conflict situations easily develop as a result. Needless to say, such situations prevent rather than promote harmonious adjustment on the part of marriage partners.

Irritability and trying situations may also arise as a result of nervous ailment. There is the person, for instance, who is suffering from nervous exhaustion. He may not consider himself a sick person. But there is in him a lack of vitality and energy occasioned by work and by neurotic problems and conflicts and anxieties. This condition will make him irritable, prone to quarreling and to antagonistic conduct generally. Conflicts may easily result. He needs to be particularly on his guard.

The In-Law Factor. The in-law problem is of sufficient magnitude to deserve some special mention, too. It often becomes a bar to satisfactory adjustments between spouses. There are, of course, many truly wonderful mothers-in-law, indivivduals who are a help and a consolation and inspiration to their married children and their spouses. But there are others, too. For example, there are those who interfere in the family affairs of their married children, and with much resultant friction and dissatisfaction between them and their spouses. Their conduct is in great part traceable to selfishness, a fault that may be closely related to a neurotic need on their part. This seems to have taken on larger proportions in this day of the small family. The mothers selfishly hold on to their limited number of offspring, even after they have flown from their nests to establish homes of their own. One result of this is that young married couples are at times torn between loyalty to parent and to spouse. That does not make for normal adjustment.

Again, there may be definite meddling on the part of the mother-in-law in the family affairs of the son or daughter. In such cases, open resentment toward her may develop, resulting in eventual antagonism between the young husband and wife. Harmonious adjustment is again interfered with.

Other relatives may also become troublemakers in family circles. A kinship group is often an ingrown group. Its members are marked by a considerable share of the same ideas and ideals, the same tastes and prejudices. An outsider who marries into such a group must often do a considerable amount of adjusting before he is accepted by the members. Yet it is essential that he be accepted, that he become an integral part of the kinship circle, if the marriage is to be really and fully successful.

The Economic Factor. The economic may also become a considerable source of conflicting attitudes and maladjustment between husband and wife. The following are some of the more outstanding forms under which this factor may show itself: sheer poverty, with its accompanying feeling of insecurity that may easily result in irritability; mismanagement of family income; need for changing the family living standard to a lower level; differences in training regarding money matters, one party, for instance, being thrifty, the other, spendthrifty; employment of the wife outside the home, contrary to the wishes of the husband. At times, even apparently insignificant money matters lead to serious and lasting disagreements between spouses. In such cases, pride, stubborness, or uncompromising attitudes often contribute toward the disturbing situation.

Personal Factors. The term "personal factors" is taken here to apply to both disposition or character and to moral behavior or conduct. Both play an important role in the field of marriage adjustment.

Individuals may be spoken of popularly as of a "good disposition" or of a "mean disposition." The element of temperament is of course involved here. For example, there is the person, with an "even" temperament or with a kindly disposition. There is no question that such an individual is preferable as a life-partner to one who has a vascilating temperament or a querulous disposition. An individual with a steady and reliable temperament or disposition is normally easier to get along with than one who is impulsive, unstable, erratic, oversensitive. Such is the case in social life generally. It is all the more the case in the close and permanent association of married life.

The term "moral character," as used here, refers particularly to ideals, to moral standards and attitudes. It should be clear that an individual with noble ideals and high moral standards normally makes a more satisfactory partner in marriage than one with ignoble ideals and low moral standards. In other words, a spouse adorned with virtues is much easier to adjust to than a spouse characterized by vicious habits or unsocial ways of living. Some virtues are, of course, more

influential than others in this connection. Particularly influential is unselfishness. It is a key trait. It normally does much to smooth the way for harmonious adjustment. Much the same is true of mildness, patience, humility, graciousness, consideration.

It should be needless to say that certain vices or evil habits have the very opposite effect. Certainly, inebriety or drunkenness in a spouse is a constant and serious threat to marital peace. Again, infidelity is a profound source of discord and estrangement between spouses. And there are other examples. Jealousy, hatred, pride, impatince, and irritability stir up the placid sea of matrimonial life and muddy its waters. They obstruct harmonious adjustment.

An Accumulation of Factors. In the foregoing we have distinguished various types of factors that cause family tensions and conflict, preventing a mutually satisfactory adjustment of spouses. But in actual family life these factors may not be so clearly distinguishable. One factor may, for instance, be the immediate cause of marital conflict, yet not be the only cause, or even the dominant one in the troubled situation. There are often a number of factors at work. In other words, there is a tendency for tension situations to become cumulative. That fact makes it more difficult both to analyze and to control a tense family situation than if only one factor were exerting an influence. Probably the worst situation of all is that in which differences between spouses have been allowed to become chronic. It is then much more difficult to dislodge them than when they first showed themselves.

3. Working Towards Adjustment

The foregoing considerations are largely negative. They suggest specific things that should be avoided if couples wish to prevent maladjustment. But there is also a positive side to the picture. It, too, should be given consideration by spouses. That is, they should not simply drift along, trusting to luck or force of circumstances to assure good adjustment. They should put forth positive efforts to build a strong and harmoniously adjusted married life.

Of particular importance here are common interests. There is no question that these can be made to contribute much to harmonious adjustment on the part of husband and wife. Where they exist they serve as wellsprings that feed affection and foster enthusiasm. They make for mutual agreement. They promote unity. Where, on the other hand, they are lacking, a married couple will be only too likely to settle down to a routine-like and humdrum existence. There will be a lack of effort or desire to please each other. There will be a loss

of spontaneous affection and enthusiasm. The two will simply take each other for granted. Such a situation is not without its real dangers. If, in the face of it, disturbing factors put in their appearance, serious disagreement may easily result, even permanent maladjustment may be the ultimate outcome.

There is undoubtedly the closest relation between common interests within the family circle and the bond of love and affection. If husband and wife possess an endowment of companion interests on their wedding day, and new interests are added as time goes on, love and happiness, and mutuality and harmonious adjustment are practically assured in their domestic life. Such common interests actively participated in by all members of a family group readily add to the fun and good cheer of home life. They foster love and loyalty between members. They assure harmony and integration—good adjustment. They can do so negatively by relieving tensions, by distracting spouses from trying situations. They can do so in positive ways by focusing attention on common goals and purposes, by arousing like sentiments and enthusiasms. Hence in both ways they can contribute toward a harmoniously adjusted and soundly unified married life.

Considerable attention was given elsewhere to a variety of common interests that can be made use of in cultivating mutual love between husband and wife. A fact of considerable practical importance regarding them that must be faced is that today many of the interests that in a simpler civilization of the past more or less automatically and naturally centered in the home, in our present highly complex civilization, by force of circumstance are pushed out of the home. The individual, however, is not entirely helpless in the matter. He can, by planning and thinking, by using his God-given intelligence, still foster a considerable number of them within the family circle. Needless to say, it is well worth his while to put forth the necessary effort to do so. They are the fuel that feeds the fire of love. And there is no surer guarantee of harmonious adjustment in marriage than a warm mutual love between husband and wife.

Other Helps Toward Adjustment or Readjustment

There are no absolute rules that can be laid down to help spouses compose their differences and work toward a satisfactory adjustment. However, there are certain guides or directives that can prove of no little help, if given sufficient attention. At least a few of these will be discussed in the following.

Knowledge of Each Other. This ranks high in importance as a factor in facilitating adjustment in marriage. Normally, husband and wife should come to know pretty thoroughly, on the one hand, what irritates the other spouse, and on the other, what gives him or her pleasure or satisfaction. In course of time the two should come to sense, as it were, what should be avoided and what should be encouraged, what should be noticed and what should be overlooked, if agreement is to be brought about, if a genuinely cordial and satisfying relationship is to be worked out and preserved between them. Not a little, of course, can already be accomplished toward this end during courtship days, since among the purposes of courtship are the attainment of a reasonable knowledge of each other, the testing of each other's disposition, and the acquisition of a reasonable certainty that there is genuine mutual love between them.

Determination of Will. Knowledge alone, essential though it be as a first step, is not sufficient to assure adjustment. Determination of will to act in accordance with the knowledge attained is also necessary. In other words, it is one thing for husband and wife to know what will make for cordial relationships, but quite another thing really to act in accordance with the knowledge. Satisfactory results cannot be expected, even where there is perfect knowledge, unless there is at the same time a determined will to do so and a keen sense of responsibility on the part of the spouses regarding duties assumed. Traits that have become more or less ingrained with the passing of years are not easily changed. It takes much more than wishful thinking to change them. It takes effort, self-discipline, self-sacrifice; in a word, it takes determination of will. If not changed, some of them may well work havoc with marriage adjustment.

A Sense of Duty. Not far removed from the foregoing consideration is a sense of duty. The cultivation of such a sense is also a matter of high importance in the matter of working out a successful marriage adjustment. Nothing else can take its place. Where there is a strong sense of duty there will be a real effort to adjust differences that exist on the part of spouses. Where, contrarily, there is a lack of it, some conflict and resulting maladjustment will probably follow as a matter of course. All marriages involve duties and hardships, ups and downs, disappointments and setbacks. If husbands and wives are not prepared to meet these; if, on the contrary, they are trying constantly to sidestep duties and difficulties, there is no question that they will eventually find themselves face to face with a very considerable amount of disharmony and dissatisfaction. Satisfactory adjustment will be wanting.

The surpassing importance of religion in this connection should be self-evident. The individual who will not be alive to his duty to God will hardly be alive to his duty to his spouse. When faced by real difficulties he will be found wanting.

Tact or Prudence. Here is another valuable asset in working out adjustment in marriage. Briefly stated, tact or prudence implies thoughtfulness and consideration, solicitude for others' feelings, and respect for others' views and opinions. A tactful spouse will keep impressed upon his or her mind, for instance, the fact that bluntness and an argumentive spirit will never lead to cordial relations in the same measure as will an unaffected frankness accompanied by a solicitude to avoid unnecessary injury and to reduce as much as possible shock and pain in others. A prudent spouse will also keep to the fore in his or her consciousness the fact that calm discussion has everything to commend it, and that it normally bears far better fruit than does heated argument. The former rather than the latter aims at getting at the facts, at uncovering the truth, at arriving at a helpful solution. The latter—heated argument—is only too likely to have for its main purpose the imposing of a preconceived opinion.

It might well be added that prudence also prompts the keeping of a right perspective. Many things in daily living can distort one's perspective. For instance, either spouse, or both, may be inclined to make mountains out of molehills, particularly at times when they are none too well disposed physically. Again, either or both may be so intent upon their own individual pleasure and wishes that they lose sight of their common interests and goals. Then, too, there are those who substitute false goals for true ones. Not uncommon, for instance, are those today who look more to the piling up of the goods of this world than to the building of a successful and peaceful married life. Undoubtedly much harm is being done to American families through incessant efforts to climb to ever higher financial heights, to ever higher standards of living. And so one could multiply examples of perspectives that are distorted or out of focus. They all contribute in some measure to the prevention of harmonious adjustment in marriage. Indeed, they are often the cause of outright maladjustment.

An Open Versus a Closed Mind. Keeping an open mind is still another help toward adjustment in marriage. Contrarily, failing to keep an open mind, or in other words, becoming too set in one's views, or too self-opinionated, can readily lead to maladjustment in married life. Marriage and family life generally, being continuous

processes of adjustment, definitely call for an open mind. They call for adaptability and flexibility. It goes without saying, of course, that where principle is at stake there is no room for compromise.

Closely allied with the idea of an open mind is a spirit of tolerance; that is, a spirit that makes reasonable allowance for the frailties and shortcomings of others. Adjustment will often be impossible without that. A sense of realism must lead husbands and wives to recognize that all human beings have some faults and failures, and that bearing with one another's faults, suspending judgment, and giving the benefit of the doubt, are often the only real solutions for difficulties and tense situations that arise. St. Paul summed the matter up as follows in speaking of the great Christian virtue of charity: "Charity is patient, is kind . . . It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (I Cor. 13:4-7).

Self-Examination. The custom of examination of conscience can be a factor of high importance in promoting a successful marriage relationship between spouses. This is true both of what is referred to as the particular examen and what is known as the general examination of conscience. The former aims directly at eradicating certain specific weaknesses or faults to which the individual may be prone—for example, a tendency to give way to impatience, envy, or jealousy. The latter aims at recalling to mind all transgressions of the moral law the individual may be guilty of at a time. Naturally, in the case of the married, such an examination should also extend to the duties of the spouses toward each other and toward their family. This implies that, instead of simply drifting along, the two at intervals stop to take stock, to discover whether there is anything in their conduct that might hinder a harmonious relationship and what they might do to promote a satisfying relationship. To be truly fruitful, of course, such an examination would also have to carry with it a renewed proposal or purpose to amend one's ways, to correct one's faults. Obviously, such a practice carried out regularly cannot but exert a far-reaching influence over the individual. And one of the ways in which it may well manifest itself is in promoting a harmonious or happily adjusted family life.

The Practice of Confesssion. The practice of confession, too, can help adjustment by checking tensions before they have an opportunity to mature, take on proportions, and become chronic. Frictions of various kinds may injure a family spirit and lead to disintegration and decay. Frequently the rifts caused thereby are mended, and even the causes of friction are removed by voluntary self-accusation in the

sacred tribunal of penance. Some domestic turmoil must be expected. It is simply a product of life that cannot be entirely avoided. But the faithful reception of the sacrament of penance speedily halts growths that would in time prove detrimental to the home. Its repeated reception serves to check the little difficulties and roughnesses of daily life that threaten to pit family members against each other and lead to harmful tensions and even eventual domestic disintegration.

In Portuguese families the following wholesome practice is still carried out in connection with the sacrament of penance. When the children leave the home to go to the church for confession, they say to their parents: "Forgive me, if I have offended you in any way." The parents answer: "May God forgive you."

Even if a similar practice is not carried out by husband and wife, there can be no doubt that, if they make proper use of the confessional regularly, they will keep any misunderstandings that may have arisen between them from becoming deep-seated or chronic. Ill feelings will not be allowed to root themselves deeply in the heart or to grow rank weeds of hatred that can only be eradicated with greatest difficulty, if at all. While, even with the most faithful use of the confessional, some minor slips may still occur because of the drive of the elemental forces of human nature and the circumstances of life, still, permanent or serious maladjustment is not very likely to result. In other words, the likelihood of serious harm to their marital life is largely shut off through faithful use of the sacrament of penance and the repeated renewal and resolution of amendment that it implies.

Expert Counsel

Even aside from cases of maladjustment that have been permitted to become chronic, there are instances that are unusually difficult or stubborn. Where such is the case it may well be advisable to seek the guidance of a competent counselor. There are unquestionably real advantages in expert counsel. The mere fact of speaking out a difficulty, of discussing it with an understanding and trained person, is already a helpful step toward working out a solution. Then, too, there is the fact that a trained and unbiased outsider or counselor may be much more able to analyze a difficult situation for a person than can the individual himself. To be sure, analysis alone is not the whole consideration. Remedies will have to be applied after the cause of the maladjustment has been laid bare. That is a task for the individual himself and often it will not be an easy one. Indeed, there will be cases in which a real moral victory will be demanded—

the surrender, for instance, of deep-seated pride. But, whether difficult or easy, the effort required will be worthwhile. And the Catholic conscience will recognize in it a matter of obligation.

In not a few cases, the priest serves effectively as counselor. He is also able as a rule to recommend other counselors, should he deem it necessary. There are usually some available in our organized Catholic charities or elsewhere. The rather unusual maladjustments which are the result of a basic personality disturbance of one kind or another in one or both partners should be referred to a psychiatrist. This is rather a specialized field, and a discussion of it can hardly be made a part of this brief and general reference to counseling.

Making a Virtue of Necessity

Situations may develop at times that will baffle even the most expert counselors and defy all corrective action. The only thing to do then is to make a virtue of necessity, to face the inevitable in a truly religious spirit of resignation. That will be at least a negative adjustment. But more still, it will be a challenge to the individual—a challenge to live up faithfully to the promises made on his wedding day—the promises embodied in the words, "I take thee, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part." It will give deep meaning for him to the words of the Savior, who reminded that, if one wishes to be His disciple, one must take up his cross daily and follow him.

The Religious Factor

It should hardly be necessary to add, in the case of the Catholic couple looking toward marriage, that the faithful practice of their religion must hold a very important place in efforts to insure a sound marriage adjustment. Their whole training should serve to make them aware of the pre-eminent importance in this regard of the cultivation of a sense of duty before God regarding the obligations assumed in marriage and of a faithful use of the means of grace that the Church puts at their disposal. Often should they recall the words of the Psalmist, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Doing so, will help them to understand even more clearly the full force of their meaning. Doing so, will serve to ingrain even more deeply in their minds the fact that it would be no less than foolhardy to expect unbroken cordial relationships in marriage and a truly peaceful family life, without the aid of the supernatural, without the aid of God, the third and all-important partner in their marriage.

TEAR OFF ALONG DOTTED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *What is meant by the term "marriage adjustment"?*
2. *Were the sexes created antagonistic or complementary to each other?*
3. *Are there any differences intellectually between men and women? Are there any differences between them insofar as imagination is concerned?*
4. *Is woman normally more flexible than man? If so, does that fact facilitate adjustment in marriage?*
5. *Show how a difference in sensitivity on the part of man and woman can cause a lack of satisfactory adjustment in marriage.*
6. *Discuss the difference in the emotion of love in man and woman.*
7. *Does due preparation for the marriage relation contribute to marriage adjustment?*
8. *Indicate a major basis of distaste for the marital relation on the part of women.*
9. *Can cultural differences prove a hindrance to marriage adjustment? Give examples of such differences.*
10. *Show how mixed marriage may prevent suitable marriage adjustment.*
11. *How might poor health prevent a good adjustment? How might the economic factor do so? the in-law factor?*
12. *Mention some personal factors that might prove barriers to adjustment between spouses.*
13. *Is it always just one specific factor that prevents a satisfactorily adjusted marriage?*
14. *Explain how interests in common on the part of husband and wife contribute to harmonious adjustment.*

15. *Show how an understanding of each other on the part of husband and wife can make for harmonious adjustment. Is knowledge alone of each other sufficient to assure good adjustment?*

16. *Show how a sense of duty plays a part in the promotion of a good adjustment in marriage.*

17. *What can be said of tact or prudence as a factor contributing to marital adjustment? What of an open as opposed to a closed mind?*

18. *How can the examination of conscience contribute to marriage adjustment? How can the sacrament of penance do so?*

19. *Is there need in some cases for expert counseling to arrive at a successful adjustment in marriage? From whom might Catholics seek counsel?*

20. *What is meant by making a virtue of necessity in case of a serious marital difficulty? Might that be called adjustment of a kind?*

21. *Show the importance of religion in bringing about a well-adjusted marriage.*

NOTES